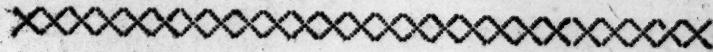


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A
R E V I E W
OF SOME OF THE
A R T I C L E S
OF THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND.



[Price Four Shillings.]

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R E V I E W

OF THE

A R T I C L E S

OF THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

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A
R E V I E W
OF SOME OF THE
A R T I C L E S
OF THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND,
TO WHICH
A SUBSCRIPTION is required
O F
Protestant Dissenting Ministers.

By SAMUEL WILTON.

*To the Law and to the Testimony; if they speak not according
to this word, it is because there is no light in them. ISAIAH.*

———— Eripe turpi
Colla jugo. Liber, liber sum, dic age.

HORATIUS.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. BUCKLAND, in Pater-noster Row;
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in Gracechurch-Street.

MDCCLXXIV.

6



P R E F A C E.

P.H.
THOSE who are prejudiced in favour of all opinions, which have the sanction of publick authority, will naturally be led to entertain a very unfavourable idea of the design of this publication. And though I am very little concerned about the censures which may be passed upon the Author, for venturing so freely to examine established opinions; I am by no means equally indifferent to the great and important cause, which this publication is intended to serve.

If the requisition of a subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles, was limited to those who seek the emoluments and preferments of the Church by Law established, there would be some *faint shadow* of justice in the charge of indecency upon Protestant Dissenters, in calling in question

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the truth and propriety of the national Creed. But the case is far different, when a subscription to almost all of the Articles, is made the indispensable condition of a legal Toleration, to those who have not the least inclination or desire, to reap the worldly advantages of a national Establishment.

Yet it is probable these objections had never seen the light, if none but the Ministers or Members of the Established Church, had pleaded against the abolition of the present Test of qualification. But some few persons who are separated from the Communion of the Church of *England*, appear to be not only fully satisfied with the authority of the Magistrate, to impose a subscription to human explanatory Articles upon the consciences of Christians; but also to be perfectly *enamoured* with all those Articles, to which a subscription is now required of Protestant Dissenting Ministers. Hence they vehemently opposed the relief of more scrupulous consciences, upon the apparent presumption, that however any proposed

alteration might favour the majority of Dissenting Ministers, it would have some very injurious influence upon their hopes, their comfort, and their obedience. Christian charity would therefore forbid an attempt, which, if crowned with success, would be productive of such unhappy consequences to any of our Fellow-christians. But as I was firmly persuaded, that the sacred Scriptures, without the aid of established Creeds, are sufficient to answer every purpose necessary to Christian edification and consolation; so it also appeared to me, that many of the Articles to which our subscription is required, were very far from having the most remote tendency to these ends; and that some of them seemed to wear a very contrary aspect. This apprehension led me in a former publication, to intimate my suspicions, that the high opinion some Dissenters entertained of the Articles, was grounded upon a very imperfect examination into their true meaning; and that a voluntary subscription to them, had in all probability frequently resulted, from a general apprehension of their orthodoxy,

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thodoxy, without entering into a critical inquiry into the sense of each. The Exposition here attempted, is designed more fully to justify the representation therein given. Upon this account, I have frequently brought into view, the high encomium passed upon the Articles by our protesting Brethren, that the propriety of my conclusion may be more easily determined. To this end, I have endeavoured to investigate the genuine sense of some of the Articles, and to point out the difficulties of subscription thence resulting, to Protestant Dissenters of *every* denomination. I have confined my attention to objections of this general nature. The authorities produced in support of the several explications, will, I hope, be thought unexceptionable by every candid and impartial Reader. It has been my study that they should be so. And if the testimony of Divines of the Church of *England*, and the decisions of the Canon Law are called in question, it will be impossible to find any authority which will not be disputed.

P R E F A C E. ix

The assistance I have derived from former Expositors, has, I confess, been much less than might have been expected or wished. But the truth is, that there never yet has appeared any Expositor, who has entered thoroughly into the discussion of all the doctrines of the Articles. I was long since convinced of the propriety of an observation, lately made by a learned Prelate, who has most honourably distinguished himself, by writing against subscription to Articles of Faith : That the Thirty-nine Articles are not to be considered as only Thirty-nine Propositions. But in fact, they have been too frequently considered in this light ; and Expositors seem to have imagined, that when they had treated upon the general subject of an Article, they had expounded the whole of it.

It is the farthest from my intention, to insinuate that any of my Brethren, do really hold all those opinions, which I have pointed out as justly exceptionable in the Articles ; however naturally such a conclusion may seem to follow, from
the

* P R E F A C E.

the manner in which they have expressed their approbation of them. I am much rather inclined to think, that they were not aware, or did not believe that such was the real sense of the Articles ; or at least, that they did not attend to it, when they so highly extolled the national Creed. And if any of them should be convinced of the propriety of my explication, I doubt not, their veneration for the Articles will in no small degree be lessened. But if any should yet think, that a very different interpretation is equally favoured by the literal sense, I cannot but hope they will allow, that the authorities produced are, at least, sufficient to justify the *doubts* of others, without involving them in the guilt of unpardonable heresy. This concession will be sufficient to my purpose.

It was not possible to avoid occasionally touching upon some of the points in dispute, between the Church of *England* and the Dissenters ; but I have said much the less upon them, as they have been so largely treated by others. Nor is it the
design

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design of the following Sheets, so much to inquire into the truth of our distinguishing Tenets ; as to point out the inconsistency of some of the Articles with those principles, which, *as Protestant Dissenters*, it must be supposed *we* hold to be true. Indeed to have attempted a defence of them at large, would in me have been only *agere melius actum*. For so long as the Dissenting Gentleman's Letters remain unanswered, it will be a needless attempt. And without pretending to the gift of prophecy, one may venture to foretell, that the men of this generation will not live to see them refuted.

In the close of this Review, I have insisted more largely upon some things, than may be thought absolutely necessary to the scope of the Argument. But as they have a natural relation, to some of the professed grounds of opposition to the Application of the Dissenters ; an Advocate for Christian Liberty, may hope to be pardoned for taking such an opportunity, of bearing his testimony against a
most

most unrighteous persecution ; which appears so evidently to have taken it's rise, from an irreconcilable aversion to certain doctrines of the Articles.

There is no reason to expect that any thing here advanced, will be effectual to convince those, whose zeal and prepossessions, or party-views and connections determine their minds against all evidence ; and will not so much as allow them to *suspect* the truth of any thing they have professed to believe, or have formerly subscribed.

Perhaps however some of our Brethren of the Episcopal Persuasion, who are utterly averse to the distinguishing tenets of Protestant Dissenters ; may be hereby led to disapprove the requisition of our subscription, to some of the Articles here reviewed ; as discerning the great and manifest impropriety, of making a subscription to any Articles, totally inconsistent with the principles common to all Dissenters, the indispensable condition of their Toleration. For it is presumed,
that

that Episcopalians, who are conscientiously attached to their principles as such, would think themselves hardly treated, if under a Presbyterian Establishment, a subscription to the truth of an Article, *denying any distinction between Bishops and Presbyters*, should be made the parallel condition, of tolerating the Ministers of an Episcopal Church.

It is also hoped that such as are by profession Protestant Dissenters, but are unhappily so biassed by various prejudices, as to be wholly uninfluenced by a just regard to the common rights of conscience, and the true principles of Toleration; may be brought to approve an Application, grounded upon more liberal principles than their own, if they should discover any reason to question the perfect conformity of the Articles of the Church, to what *they themselves* believe to be true. And if this Exposition should happily contribute, to produce such an alteration in their views and conduct, I shall esteem myself amply recompensed.

I have

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I have no sinister or party-views in this publication. My sole intention is to serve the common cause of Christian truth and liberty; and to promote that esteem and veneration for the sacred Scriptures, which as Protestants we ought ever zealously to maintain; but which have been greatly and fatally lessened, by that undue reverence which has been paid, to established human decisions.

I am conscious of many defects in the execution of this work, over which, I hope, the friends of the cause will generously cast the veil of candour.

That the God of Truth may succeed this feeble and imperfect attempt, for the advancement of his own glory, and promoting the unity, peace, and prosperity of the Church of Christ, is the fervent prayer of the Author,

S. W.

Lower Tooting,

March 8, 1774.

INTRO-



INTRODUCTION.

THE application of the Protestant Dissenting Ministers to Parliament, to be released from the obligation to subscribe the articles of the church of *England*, as the condition of legal toleration, has been variously represented and understood. The adversaries of the Dissenters bill have not scrupled to assert, that our objections to the present established mode of qualification, were merely the offspring of infidelity. The principal argument, by which such a gross misrepresentation has been supported, is drawn from the supposed perfect conformity of the articles of the church of *England*, to the sacred scriptures. Upon this occasion the most extravagant encomiums have been passed upon the established formula of faith. The articles of the Church have sometimes been dignified with the appellation of the *very articles of Christianity*; and at other times, yet more modestly, set far above the Scriptures in point of use and importance. I shall however leave the propriety of such decisions to the
B judg-

2 INTRODUCTION.

judgment of the impartial reader, when he has perused the following sheets; at present only observing, that the truth or falshood of the articles, was but a secondary consideration with us in the late application to Parliament. The first and general objection of the Dissenters, to the present requisition of the toleration-act, is grounded upon the opinion they entertain, of the supreme and sole authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, as Head and Lawgiver of his church—of the right of private judgment—and the sufficiency and perfection of the Scriptures. These are opinions which they cannot possibly reconcile to the claim of the state, to impose any explanatory articles upon the consciences of Christians, as a condition of toleration. They look upon human authority to be an incompetent one in all matters of religion, which is a personal concern between God and a man's own conscience; and that every exertion of it, in this case, is an infringement upon the natural and unalienable rights of conscience. However agreeable therefore the articles might be to their own private opinions, this objection would still be left in its full force.

But we do not wish it to be concealed, that a great number among us, do not apprehend, there is that strict conformity between the sacred scriptures and the articles of the church

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of *England* which others contend for. Wherein they differ, is a question variously determined by men of various opinions. All the writers against the articles, which have ever fallen in my way, have particularly opposed those doctrines contained in them, which are commonly known by the name of *Orthodoxy*. Why they suffered others to enjoy an undisturbed repose, I take not upon me to determine. Hence however it seems to have been generally, but, as I hope to shew, very erroneously concluded, that none but *Socinians*, *Arians*, and *Arminians*, can have any objection to the doctrines of those articles, which we are required to subscribe.

I profess, in common with many of my brethren, that I can neither intirely agree with those, who, on the one hand, represent the articles as perfectly consonant to the Scriptures; nor with those on the other, who have objected to doctrines contained in them, which upon the authority of Scripture I receive; but which, in my opinion, are much better expressed in some other human systems, than in the articles of the church of *England*, and best of all in the Bible itself.

I mean no reflection upon the character of the Reformers, whose memory I greatly revere.

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Indeed whoever considers their situation, will, I am sure, commend their wisdom and prudence in conducting that important and glorious revolution, which took place in consequence of their noble protest against the corruptions of the church of *Rome*. To have attempted a complete reformation at once, even so far as they saw it wanting, would have been a visionary scheme. It is easy to discern, that it was the wisdom of the first Reformers to proceed with great caution and deliberation—to make that a work of time, which, if it was ever done effectually, must be done by slow degrees; for we have had many instances of similar designs being totally defeated, by too great a precipitance in the measures adopted, and too quick advances even in the good work of reformation. Prejudices which have been long established, and are deeply riveted in the human mind, are neither easily nor speedily to be eradicated; especially when they are favoured by having worldly interest on their side, and penalties and persecutions stand in the way of opposing and renouncing them. It was therefore wisely ordered by a superintending Providence, that the Reformation should be begun by aiming the first blow against those corruptions, which were both most notorious in themselves, and had at the same time the least interest in the prejudices of the vulgar. Indeed, strictly speaking, those
who

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who first distinguished themselves in this good work, were too strongly attached to many of the gross corruptions of the idolatrous church of *Rome*, to carry the Reformation to any great length. It is well known, that *John Hus*, and *Jerome of Prague*, suffered martyrdom only for their "opposition to the pomp, pride, avarice, " and other wicked enormities of the Pope, " Cardinals, and Prelates of the church; and " because they could not abide the high dignities and livings of the church; while they " were themselves believers in the doctrines of " transubstantiation, the seven sacraments, and " other distinguishing tenets of the church of " *Rome* *." Nor did the Leaders of the Reformation in our own country, intirely renounce all her erroneous doctrines and superstitions. But without entering minutely into the history of the period in which the church of *England* was established, I would only observe, that, after the Reformers had gradually purged the profession of Christianity, from many corruptions both of faith and worship, human authority unhappily interposed, to put a period to the progress of reformation, by establishing, together with a partial reformation, some considerable remains of antichristian error and superstition †.

To

* Fox's Acts and Monuments, Edit. 9. 1684. large paper. Vol. I. p. 718, 722, & seq.

† The opinion of the first Reformers and Martyrs, has been

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To the most heroic exercise of a freedom of inquiry, and the most laudable opposition to human

been frequently urged as a reason against objecting to any sentiments, which had the sanction of their judgment and approbation. The language, used by some persons on this head, seems to intimate, that it is essential to being true Protestants, to maintain all the opinions held by those, who first distinguished themselves as friends to the Reformation. But such persons forget, that, according to the *fundamental principle* of Protestantism, we must bring the sentiments of the Reformers to the same test with all others. It more especially becomes Protestant Dissenters to recollect, that Puritanism owed its rise to the persuasion our forefathers had, that there was a necessity for a much farther reformation in some points both of doctrine and discipline. The most zealous assertors of the opinion I am now controverting, are not, I apprehend, aware of the conclusions which will follow from their own principles; and are probably ignorant of many of the tenets of the Reformers. For otherwise, it cannot without a breach of charity be supposed, that they would press upon any the obligation of believing and approving, whatever the first Reformers believed and approved. Of this the Reader may judge from the following specimens.

There is no inconsiderable taint of the doctrines and superstitions of the church of *Rome*, in the Injunction which made express provision, “ that such images as the clergy
“ knew in any of their cures to be or to have been abused
“ with pilgrimage or offering of any thing made there-
“ unto, or that should be afterwards censured unto, they (and
“ none other private persons) should, for the avoiding of
“ that most detestable offence of idolatry, forthwith take
“ down, or cause to be taken down, and destroy the same;
“ and should suffer from thenceforth no torches or candles,

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human authority in matters of religion, we are indebted, under God, for the rise and progress of

“ dles, tapers or images of wax to be set afore any image
 “ or picture, *but only two lights upon the high altar, before*
 “ *the SACRAMENT*, which, for the signification that Christ
 “ is the very true light of the world, they should suffer to
 “ remain still: admonishing their parishioners, that images
 “ serve for no other purpose but to be a remembrance,
 “ whereby men may be admonished of the holy lives and
 “ conversation of them that the said images do represent.”
 This custom of placing two lights upon the altar, is still retained in all Cathedral and Collegiate churches, and also in some others.

The same may be observed concerning the Injunction, which warranted the continuance of several other superstitious customs under certain limitations, in the following words:

“ Also that they shall instruct and teach in their cures, that
 “ no man ought obstinately and maliciously to break and
 “ violate the laudable ceremonies of the Church, by the
 “ King commanded to be observed, and as yet not abro-
 “ gated. And, on the other side, that whosoever doth
 “ superstitiously abuse them, doth the same to the great
 “ peril and danger of his soul's health: as in casting holy
 “ water upon his bed, upon images, and other dead things;
 “ or bearing about him holy bread, or St. John's gospel;
 “ or making of crosses of wood upon Palm-Sunday, in time
 “ of reading of the passion, or keeping of private holy days,
 “ as bakers, brewers, smiths, shoemakers, and such other
 “ do; or ringing of Holy bells, or blessing with the Holy
 “ candle, *to the intent thereby to be discharged of the burden of*
 “ *sin, or to drive away devils, or to put away dreams and phan-*
 “ *tasies, or in putting trust and confidence of health and salva-*
 “ *tion in the same ceremonies*, when they be only ordained, in-
 “ stituted and made, *to put us in remembrance of the benefits*
 “ *which we have received by Christ.* And if he use them
 “ for

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of the Reformation; and to the controul of both by the penal statutes, we may justly ascribe its present imperfection.

This leads me to take a review of some of those articles of the church of *England*, which favour strongly of the superstition and ignorance of the times preceding the Reformation. One question is however necessary to be proposed and determined; previously to the examination of the articles themselves—a question which has indeed been frequently agitated, and very warmly debated, as if it had been one of the most difficult questions in the world: and yet I hardly know any question which will admit of a more easy and plain solution. The apparent difficulty has never arisen out of the question itself, but from a painful apprehension of the reflections and reproaches, which would natu-

“for *any other purpose*, he grievously offendeth God.”
K. Edw. VI. Injunctions, A. D. 1547. Injunct. 4, 28.

The doctrine of Purgatory seems to be maintained in the last clause of the bidding prayer, established at the same time, and by the same authority. “Ye shall *pray* for all them that be departed out of this world in the faith of Christ, that they with us, and we with them *at the day of judgment may rest both body and soul*, with ABRAHAM, ISAAC, and JACOB, in the kingdom of heaven.” This form continued in use till the year 1559, when it was altered by the authority of Queen *Elizabeth’s* Injunctions; and, instead of *praying*, the clergy were, with more propriety, commanded to “*praise* God for all those departed out of this life in the faith of Christ.”

rally

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rally follow the true solution of it. The question is this: In what sense are we required to subscribe the articles of the church of England? I answer, in the plain, literal, grammatical sense, as understood when the articles were set forth by publick authority.

In confirmation of the propriety of this solution, we need only attend to the language of the Royal declaration *; a declaration, which will by no means admit of the subterfuges, to which many ingenious writers have had recourse, to justify a subscription to articles which they do not believe. It is the declared end of the requisition, "to avoid diversities of opinions, and "to establish consent touching true religion." In reference to this end, the Royal declaration prohibits the least difference from the said articles. What terms can be more explicit than the following, made use of therein? "We will that "no man hereafter shall either print or preach "to draw the Article aside *any way*, but shall "submit to it in the *plain* and *full* meaning

* The controversy, concerning the *date* of the Royal declaration, is not at all material to the purport of my inquiry; as it is on all hands agreed, that it was in force long before the Toleration-Act took place. That it was first published by authority of King *Charles the First* in 1628 is, I think, very satisfactorily proved by Dr. *Winchester*, in a tract annexed to his *Dissertation on the 17th article of the Church of England*.

" thereof;

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“ thereof; and shall not put his *own sense* or
“ *comment* to be the meaning of the Article,
“ but shall take it in the *literal* and *gramma-*
“ *tical* sense.”

How then is it possible, to reconcile a subscription to them only so far as *we think them* agreeable to the word of God, with obedience to this Royal mandate? Or how will such a subscription answer the end of the requisition; while men differ so much in their opinions, respecting the measure of agreement, or disagreement, between the articles of the Church, and the doctrines of christianity? Nor has the *flux of time* created any change in the *literal grammatical* sense of the *article*, whatever revolutions have taken place in the sentiments of mankind, respecting any of the doctrines contained in those articles. So that the plea which has been adopted for vindicating a subscription to them, in that sense which the flux of time has given them, will by no means apply to the terms and conditions, in and upon which alone subscription is allowed. To subscribing them in the sense of the *present Imposers*, there are insuperable objections; for not to say, that the present Imposers ought neither themselves to have subscribed, nor to admit subscription from others, in a sense different from the *literal* and *grammatical* one; I would add, that it is
more

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more than probable, all the Imposers are not agreed among themselves in their judgment upon these points.

Can it be imagined that the whole bench of Bishops, all the Heads of Houses in the two Universities, and all the Justices presiding in the quarterly sessions throughout the Kingdom, are happily united in opinion upon the doctrines of the Thirty-nine Articles? Yet these are all, within their respective jurisdictions, Imposers of the Subscription on Candidates for holy orders, on Students at Colleges, and Dissenting Ministers, who apply for a legal toleration.

In many instances we know there is a great diversity of opinions among them. And hence another difficult question will arise. Whose opinion shall be binding in preference to all the rest? Besides, on this supposition it would be justly censurable to subscribe, without knowing the sense of the Imposers; and it is no impertinent inquiry upon this topick, How shall we attain that knowledge? Would not a candidate for holy orders, be thought greatly wanting in modesty and respect, if previously to his subscription, he should interrogate his Diocesan upon each of the Thirty-nine Articles, and desire to have a full and free confession of his faith?

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faith? Would not the same imputation be fastened upon Students at the University? And above all how curious is the conceit, of a Protestant Dissenting Minister requesting the sense of a bench of Justices, upon the controverted points of religion? I would not willingly, or indecently reflect upon the piety and learning of their Worship; but yet I greatly question, whether in many cases, they could honestly affix *any sense at all* to the articles, as properly speaking *their own*; having most probably never studied, if perchance they may have occasionally read them. And if no sense is given by them, or if they cannot affix any, it will follow that the person qualifying, is to subscribe them in no sense whatever; his subscription must be a ridiculous unmeaning form. This cannot indeed comport with the design of the Legislature, otherwise it might afford relief to some men of scrupulous consciences, thus happily freed from those difficulties about subscription, which the *literal*, or *any given sense* of the *Imposers* might have created. That they are to be subscribed as *articles of Peace*, is a mere political suggestion; totally inconsistent with the titles, and subjects of the articles, and grounded solely upon the mistaken view, which the Compilers might entertain of a necessary connection, between an entire uniformity of sentiment among

INTRODUCTION. 13

all publick teachers, and the peace of the state. They had indeed a respect to peace, but then it is to be remembered, that they had a prior regard to such an agreement in opinion, as the *only means of establishing and maintaining* that peace. A subscription to them in this view, cannot therefore be justified by those who disbelieve the *truth* of the articles. A late zealous advocate for subscription, has however told us for our relief, that some of them were not intended as *Credenda*; i. e. that some of the Thirty-nine Articles, all of which the Clergy are bound to subscribe *ex animo*, in testimony of their assent to them *as agreeable to the word of God**, were yet never intended to be believed. But till he, or some other Divine, equally skilled in Logic, and equally learned in political and ecclesiastical distinctions, shall condescend to produce some better authority for his assertion, than his own mere *ipse dixit*, and to draw the line between those of the one class and of the other, I doubt his distinction will do little honour to himself; and no service at all to us †.

* See Canon 36 of 1603—which clearly shews how much advantage may be *honestly* taken of this distinction.

† See a pamphlet, intitled, *A Letter to the Protestant Dissenting Ministers who lately solicited Parliament for further Relief*, p. 7. which is generally, and I believe justly, ascribed to the Rev. Dr. BUTLER, Archdeacon in the Diocese of Winchester for the parts of Surry.

The

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The late Dr. *Bennet* justly observes, that “ tho’
 “ the title page of the articles would not afford
 “ us any light with respect to the sense of our
 “ subscription to them; yet those Laws, eccle-
 “ siastical and civil, which injoin the subscrip-
 “ tion, do put the matter beyond all question;
 “ and evidently demonstrate, that no subscrip-
 “ tion could be meant or allowed, but such
 “ as imported a belief of the articles subscri-
 “ bed.” In confirmation of this assertion, he re-
 “ fers to several clauses in the stat. 13 *Eliz.* chap. 12.
 “ and to several canons of the Church. He far-
 “ ther observes to the same end, that “ what the
 “ *English* copy of the canons of 1603 called
 “ *subscribing unto* the Articles, is in the *Latin*
 “ expressed by *subscribing in eorum veritatem*;
 “ that is, *subscribing to the truth* of the Articles:
 “ *Can. 5.* And *subscribing* to the Articles in the
 “ *English* copy of the 127 *Can.* of the same
 “ year, is in the *Latin* expressed by *subscriptione*
 “ *sua comprobare*. So little (adds he,) did our
 “ Fore-fathers dream of men’s subscribing such
 “ articles as they did not believe true.” To
 “ this evidence is annexed the determination of all
 “ the Judges of *England* as extracted from Lord
 “ chief Justice *Coke*,* who says “ I heard *Wray*
 “ chief Justice in the King’s Bench *pasch* 23
 “ *Eliz.* report, that where one *Smith* subscribed
 “ to the said Thirty-nine Articles of Religion,

* Infit. 4. Cap. 74. p. 324.

“ with

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“ with this addition (*so far forth as the same*
 “ *were agreeable to the word of God*) it was re-
 “ solved by him and all the Judges of *England*,
 “ that this subscription was not according to
 “ the statute of 13th *Eliz.* Because the sta-
 “ tute required an *absolute* subscription, and
 “ this subscription made it *conditional*; and
 “ that this Act was made for avoiding of di-
 “ versity of opinions, &c. and by this addi-
 “ tion the party might by his own private opi-
 “ nion take some of them to be against the
 “ word of God, and by this means diversity
 “ of opinions should not be avoided, which
 “ was the scope of the statute, and the very
 “ Act itself made touching subscription hereby
 “ of none effect.” The Doctor also maintained
 upon good authority, that it was “ the constant
 “ sense and opinion of those, who had the best
 “ opportunities of knowing the extent and force
 “ of their subscription to the Articles, that such
 “ subscription obliged them to, and actually
 “ imported a belief of the truth of the Articles
 “ subscribed *.”

It is not a little astonishing, to find the same
 Divine afterwards in the same Essay, pleading
 for such a latitude in subscription, as is equally
 inconsistent with the end of subscription, with

* Benner's Essay on the Thirty-nine Articles, ch. xxxlii.
 P. 413, 417, 419.

that

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that latitude he had before opposed. For he tells us that "the Church requires only the belief of the Articles in general; and does not restrain us to the belief of any one article or proposition in any particular sense, farther than we are confined and determined by the words themselves." Upon this apprehension, as the Doctor supposes the *words* of the Articles, to be fairly capable of different and contrary interpretations, he thinks any man's subscription to them may be fully justified, "who believes them to be true in any such sense, as they will reasonably admit without doing violence to the words*." The inferences drawn by the Doctor from this general principle, if allowed to be just, would produce and warrant as great a diversity of opinions, as if no subscription were enjoined to avoid it. And there is just the same evidence, to support the obligation of all subscribers to believe *every particular Article*, and *every particular proposition* contained in it, as can be alleged in support of the obligation to a *general* belief of them. And nothing seems more absurd than to suppose, that Articles drawn up for the purpose of *avoiding* diversity of opinions, should be purposely so constructed, that they might reasonably admit a *variety* of interpretations *opposite* to each other.

* Bennet, ubi supra, ch. xxxv. p. 439.

Another

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Another expedient has been adopted by some persons, to evade the obligation of believing certain particular doctrines contained in the Articles, which is, to consider them only as so many definitions of terms, and not as affirming the doctrines so defined. By the help of such a jesuitical evasion, as has been justly observed, neither a *Jew* nor a *Turk*, nor a *Papist*, would scruple to subscribe the Articles, on account of the doctrines contained in them *.

Upon the whole, it appears clearly to me, that the hypothesis of a latitude intended by the Compilers, and allowed to the Subscribers, is totally indefensible in itself; nor would so many able pens have been drawn in its support, if it had not been the *dernier resource* of men, who wished to justify themselves from the heinous charge of hypocrisy and prevarication, in subscribing to Articles which they were conscious to themselves, they did not believe in the plain and literal sense.

The preceding review of this subject, is but a very partial and incomplete representation of the different principles, which have in different degrees been applied, to justify a conduct which is a reproach to the preachers of the christian

* See Mr. Toplady's *Church of England vindicated from the charge of Arminianism*, p. 17.

18 INTRODUCTION.

religion. But the same considerations which have been urged in the preceding pages, will equally operate against every other scheme, which has been adopted by the numerous patrons of an *unbelieving* Subscription. However, such as would see this subject professedly treated, and pursued thro' all the arts of sophistry, may receive ample satisfaction by reading the *Confessional*; in which the cause of integrity and uprightness is pleaded in a most masterly manner, and the insufficiency of every plea for prevarication, is clearly detected, and justly exposed.

I have only to add upon this point, that it is unquestionably evident, that so far as Protestant Dissenting Ministers are concerned in subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles, they are required to subscribe them in the *same sense*, and *under the same restrictions*, with the ministers of the church of *England*. With this idea then immoveably fixed in our minds, that the plain, literal, grammatical sense, is the *only sense* in which we are to subscribe them, let us see how such a subscription will accord, with the opinions of Protestant Dissenters of different denominations, on the several points of the following Articles.

ARTI-

ARTICLE III.

AS Christ died for us, and was buried: so also is it to be believed, that he went down into Hell.

By *Hell* we commonly understand the place of torment, prepared for the wicked in the future and invisible world. The plain, literal, grammatical sense of this Article seems therefore to be, that Christ went down into the regions of the *Damned*. But this is no where the doctrine of Scripture, nor is it, I believe, at this day, an Article in the creed of any Protestant whatsoever. Some Writers, sensible of the difficulties attending the literal interpretation, have bestowed no small pains, to reconcile the doctrine of this Article, with the language of scripture; and many have taken the liberty to put their *own sense* upon it, without carefully examining the sense of the Compilers. I shall endeavour to investigate that sense, and impartially weigh the evidence of the different interpretations, given of this much controverted clause. And since it is on all hands confessed, that the Article is grounded upon that formula, which is commonly called the *Apostles creed*; it's true meaning may in part be derived, from the best evidence we can collect of the sense, in

which the controverted phrase, was therein used, or understood.

The conceit of the Schoolmen, that it refers to a partition in Hell, called *Limbus patrum*, or (if you please) *Purgatory*, where all the good men of the old dispensation that died before Christ, were detained; does not deserve the least consideration. I would not follow a *popish* scent in explaining the Article of a *protestant* Church, any farther than necessity constrains me.

Others imagine, that as this Article in the creed is mentioned by no writer before *Ruffinus*, and was adopted by him from the creed of the Church at *Aquileia*, in which no mention is made of Christ's burial; that this clause was probably substituted as an equivalent expression. But it is ridiculous to suppose, that can be its meaning in the Article before us, since the preceding clause asserts that he was *buried*, or informs us, how his body was disposed of. This seems plainly intended to shew us what became of his separated spirit. If we admit this sense of the phrase, the nonsensical tautology it will introduce, will confute all that has been, or can be said in support of it. Let us only read the Article with this amendment and explication. As Christ died for us, and was buried;

so *also* is it to be believed, that he went down into the Grave, or was *buried*.

The opinion of *Durandus*, that this phrase signifies nothing more, than the efficacious presence of the Soul of Christ in Hell, including a *virtual* motion, by which descent, the effects of the death of Christ were wrought upon the souls in Hell*; is so foreign to the most obvious scope of the words, and so entirely destitute of the least countenance from any of the Ancients, that I wonder it should ever have been adopted by any writer of learning or judgment.

The metaphorical sense in which *Calvin* understands this phrase, as alluding to the agonies of Christ upon the cross, when he endured the wrath and curse of God in the room and stead of sinners, can by no means be admitted to be the true sense of the Article in question; because it relates to something *subsequent* to his death, and is expressed in terms which intimate a removal from one place to another, but which are not at all descriptive of any particular state of mind. *Calvin* indeed treats this as a frivolous objection, but his answer to it is very unsatisfactory †.

* Durandus Lib. 3. Diff. 22. Q. 3.

† Calvini Instit. Lib. II. Cap. xvi. § 10. Edit. Lug. Bat. 1654.

Upon this subject, I am particularly led to consider the late Lord Chancellor KING's critical history of the Apostles creed. His Lordship is not only an able and zealous advocate, for what I conceive to be the true sense of Scripture; but likewise endeavours to prove that the most natural, easy, and unconstrained interpretation of this perplexed and obscure Article, is consonant to that sense. Herein I think his Lordship's proof materially defective. To justify this conclusion, I beg the reader's attention to the following observations, grounded partly on what he offers in support of his opinion, and principally on the concessions he makes in favour of the contrary opinion.

With respect to Lord KING's opinion, it is first to be observed, that we have no controversy with him about the sense of the word *Hades* as used in the Scriptures, nor is that the proper state of the question in this inquiry; but in what sense, those passages on which the Article in the creed is founded, appear to have been generally understood. In like manner it may be farther premised, that whatever ambiguity there might be in the *Saxon* original of the *English* word *Hell*, since it is allowed to have been most generally used to signify the infernal regions; and since it is not so much as questioned that it included that idea, no advantage
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can be taken of the original ambiguity of the word, if there is any positive evidence, that it was understood and used in any limited sense by the Compilers of the Articles. Of this we may be able to judge hereafter.

To return to his Lordship's history. He acknowledges that we have not any one word in the *English* dialect, nor by what he could ever understand, in any other of the present *European* tongues, to express the *Greek* word *Hades*—that the French word *L'Enfer*, and the *English* and *Dutch* words *Hell* and *Helle*, are always taken in an evil sense; but observes that in the ancient *English* dialect, it was taken in a larger sense, and has recourse to the *Saxon* original of the word, to justify this larger interpretation. It is derived, he says, from the old *Saxon* word *Hil**, or from the participle thereof *Helled*, i. e. *bidden* or *covered*. And from the use of the word *Hele* in his time, and I believe at present, in the *Western* parts of *England*, signifying to *cover*, whence a man that covers a House with tile or slate, is called an *Helliar*, he thinks this word is equivalent with the *Greek* word *Hades*, as denoting an *unseen place*†.

* *Lye* in his Anglo-Saxon Dictionary makes the verb *Halan*.

† See Critical History of the Apostles Creed, Chap. iv. *passim*.

But to the application of this meaning in the present case, I think there are some solid objections. It is remarkable, that we do not find any theological writers, at or about the time when the Articles were compiled, who ever speak of good men as going down into *Hell* upon their removal out of this world; but they appropriated the word *Hell* in their sermons, and other writings, to signify the place of torment. As to the instance produced by his Lordship, it may rather favour the opinion of the phrase referring to Christ's burial, than of the Soul's being in the separate state. For it is very questionable, whether this larger sense of the word *Hell*, where it prevails as a provincial dialect, is ever applied to the departed spirit. They might say perhaps of the interment of the body, that it was *Heled*, but I much doubt, whether they would use the same language in reference to the soul.

With respect to the testimonies alleged from the *Greek* and *Latin* heathens, to prove that *Hades* and *Inferi* were understood to signify the common receptacle of departed souls, both good and bad; it is proper to observe, we readily allow that such was the constant sense of the former, and the frequent sense of the latter word in the purest classical ages; but whether they were always, or generally understood in
this

this sense, as adopted by Christian authors into their theological writings, is quite a different question; and no fair inference can be drawn in proof of the affirmative from the heathen writers: especially as he acknowledges, that in the declension of the *Greek* and *Latin* tongues, both the words *Hades* and *Inferi* came to be chiefly understood in an evil sense.

It is farther to be observed, when he treats of the opinions of the Fathers, he confesses that so early as *Origen's* time, that ancient writer would not allow the Souls of the godly to go to *Hell*, since the resurrection of Christ, as he acknowledged they did before; but sent them to *paradise*, which he assigned to be a different place from *Hell*, not in *Hell*, as others believed it to be. His Lordship allows farther, that *Origen's* opinion was followed by several in the *Western* Church, where it prevailed to the exclusion of the ancient doctrine, and at length came to be appropriated to signify a place of torment, or misery and obscurity. I will venture add, that we are most likely to find the true original sense of this Article, in the opinion of the *Western* Church, which has been most generally followed in this part of the world. Among those who held *Origen's* opinion, he reckons *St. Ambrose*, and *St. Jerom*; and represents *Austin* as sometimes wavering and uncertain

tain in his apprehensions of this point. Of the same sentiment, he says, were *Petrus Chrysologus*, *Gennadius Massiliensis*, *Gregory the Great*, and several others of the succeeding writers. But to save himself the trouble of a distinct enumeration of them all, he allows that the generality of the *Latin* Fathers embraced this notion. Now it should be remembered, that this creed came to us through the channel of the *Latin* Church. I will only add with respect to some passages, produced by his Lordship to prove, that the ancient Christian writers understood the words *Hades* and *Inferi* in the sense he contends for, that they seem strongly to favour of the doctrine of purgatory, which accounts for the mode of expression. And we readily grant, that there are many passages in the Writings of the *earlier* Christian Fathers, in which the words will not only admit, but require a general construction. But since there are many others, particularly referring to the local motion of the soul of Christ after his death, which cannot possibly be taken in so large a sense,—passages which do not only expressly assert the descent of Christ into the regions of the *Damned*, but point out the several purposes effected by it, in terms which will admit of no dispute; the evidence from the latter, ought surely to be considered as by far the most decisive.

From

From the preceding review of the evidence as stated by his Lordship, I conclude that there is very little weight in urging the true sense of *Ath.* II. 27, upon which this Article is founded; to prove that the sense of the Compilers of the creed, much less of the Compilers of the Articles, was agreeable thereto. For it seems that the latter rather made use of the judgment of the Fathers, to explain the sense of the Scriptures; than of the Scriptures to correct the opinions of the Fathers.

Upon the whole, though his Lordship was led to expound many passages in the ancient Christian writers, in favour of the opinion, that what he accounted the true sense of Scripture, was exactly the same with the true sense of the Creed; yet it is very evident, as will hereafter appear, that they were differently understood by the writers of the Church of *England* before him. So that his explication of the creed, cannot possibly be admitted as a rule, whereby to determine the sense of the Article.

We shall next examine the sentiments of the learned Bishop *Pearson*, in his exposition of this Article of the creed*. He has entered very minutely into the consideration of all the different

* *Pearson's Exposition*, Edit. 12. p. 238—252.

senses,

senses, which have been put upon it; and if the reader has not too scrupulous a regard to his own edification, he may make himself master of all the various conjectures about the ends and effects of Christ's going down into Hell, together with the Bishop's full and particular confutation, of some of the most superstitious fancies of the Fathers. The impartial reader will not hesitate to conclude from his Lordship's authorities, that the most natural and probable interpretation of the creed, is in favour of Christ's real descent into the place of torment. And yet it is very remarkable, his Lordship has been frequently quoted by the moderns, as an authority for a different interpretation. This must either be owing to a strange inattention, to the state of the evidence as given by that learned Prelate; or to taking the matter upon trust, from what his Lordship has advanced concerning the general signification of the words. But the propriety of the inference, I shall readily submit to the judgment of every intelligent Reader.

He has indeed observed, that some of the ancient Fathers understood the word *Hades* to have the same comprehensive signification, which it had among the *Greeks*. The Bishop does not however so much as hint, that the word was understood in their sense of it by the Compilers; much less as importing nothing more

more than simply the removal of the soul of Christ into the intermediate State. From some of his quotations from those ancient Fathers, it plainly appears, that the idea they had of the state of the departed souls even of *good* men, before the coming of Christ, was that of a state of *misery*, rather than a state of *happiness*—the proper Purgatory of the *Papists*. Comparatively taken, in opposition to the state of the wicked, they sometimes called this an happy state; but much more generally described it, as a state of expectation of that release and deliverance, which they supposed was effected by Christ's descent into this territory of *Hades*. This sense is therefore very little distant from the notion of Christ's going down into Hell; nor did they mean to *exclude* that idea. So far from it, that the Bishop says, "They who thought that Christ delivered the *Patriarchs* from their infernal Mansions, did not think so exclusively, or in opposition to the disobedient and damned Spirits; but conceived many of *them* to be saved, as well as the *Patriarchs* were, and doubted whether all were not so saved, or no. Indeed I think, says he, there were very few, if any, for above five hundred years after Christ, which did so believe Christ delivered the Saints out of Hell, as to leave all the damned there."

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He observes that *St. Augustin* began to question whether the souls of the *Patriarchs* and *Prophets* were *apud Inferos*, and consequently to question Christ's going there after them; because he thought the word *Infernus* was never taken in a good sense in the Scriptures. But this is very different from asserting, that he was the first, or the only Christian Father who held the opinion of Christ's going to the *Damned*. On the contrary, he expressly asserts, that Christ's shewing himself to the souls of the departed after his death, and preaching the gospel to them, in order, that whosoever of them would yet accept of and acknowledge him, should pass from death to life, was the general opinion of the Fathers, as the end of his descent.

He sums up the judgment of all the Fathers in these words. "Thus did they think the soul of Christ descended into Hell, to preach the gospel to the spirits there; that they might receive Him, who before believed in Him; or that they might believe in Him, who before rejected Him." He confirms the truth of these representations, by many testimonies from their Writings.

Let it also be observed, that he delivers it as an opinion which did *especially obtain* in the Church of *England*, that the end for which our Saviour

Saviour descended into Hell, was to triumph over Satan, and all the powers below, within their own dominions. And though he professedly combats this notion, he does not once urge the third Article of the Church against the Advocates for it, which would have been much to his purpose, if he had thought it did not refer to the place of torment, or *Hell*, properly so called.

But then it will be said perhaps by some, Does not the Bishop's own exposition of this article of the Creed, warrant the inference that it refers solely to the passing of the soul of Christ into the separate state, allotted to the souls of the righteous? Now in answer to this question, I beg leave to remark, that Bishop *Pearson* intended, and endeavoured to give the world such an exposition, as he thought conformable to the Scriptures; rather than professedly to establish the generally received doctrine. He does not therefore give us the least intimation, nor attempt to produce any evidence, that his own interpretation, so far as it differs from the opinions he condemned, was the sense of the Compilers. His own account of the principles on which he proceeded in expounding this Article, deserves our attention in this view. "Our present design, says he, is an exposition of the

“ Creed as now it stands; and our endeavour
 “ is, to expound it according to the *Scriptures*
 “ in which it is contained. I must therefore
 “ look for such an explication, as may consist
 “ with the other parts of the Creed, and may
 “ withal be conformable unto that scripture,
 “ upon which the truth of the Article doth
 “ rely. And consequently whatsoever inter-
 “ pretation is either not true in itself, or not
 “ consistent with the body of the Creed, or not
 “ conformable to the doctrine of the Apostle
 “ in this particular, the expositor of that Creed,
 “ by the doctrine of the Apostle, must reject.”

Accordingly upon this ground his Lordship re-
 jects the notion of Christ's suffering the tor-
 ments of the damned—of his descending into
 Hell *to conquer Satan, spoil Hell, and lead cap-*
tivity captive—and several other of the opinions
 before referred to.

But after all, this learned Prelate seems rather
 to differ in judgment from the generality of
 the advocates for Christ's real descent into Hell,
 about the ends and effects of that descent; than
 as to the place into which He descended. The
 following extracts seem fully to justify this as-
 sertion.

“ We have already shewn the substance of
 “ the Article, says he, to consist in this; that
 “ the

“ the soul of Christ, really separated from his
 “ body by death, did truly pass unto the places
 “ below, where the souls of men departed were.
 “ And I conceive the end, for which He did so,
 “ was, that He might undergo the condition
 “ of a *dead* man, as well as of a *living*. He
 “ appeared *here* in the similitude of *sinful flesh*,
 “ and went into the other world *in the similitude*
 “ *of a sinner.*”

“ Secondly, By the descent of Christ into
 “ *Hell*, all those which believe in Him are se-
 “ cured from descending *thither*; He went into
 “ those *regions of darkness*, that our souls might
 “ never come into those torments which are
 “ *there*. By his descent He freed us from our
 “ fears, as by his ascension He secured us of
 “ our hopes. He passed to those habitations,
 “ *where Satan hath taken up possession, and exer-*
 “ *ciseth his dominion*, that, having no power
 “ over Him, we might be assured, that he
 “ should never exercise any over our souls de-
 “ parted, as belonging unto him. Through
 “ death He destroyed him that had the power
 “ of death, that is, the devil; and, by his
 “ *actual descent into the dominions of him so de-*
 “ *stroyed*, secured all which have an interest in
 “ Him, of the same freedom which He had.”

“ Having thus examined the several
 “ interpretations of this part of the article,

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“ we

“ we may now give a brief and safe account
 “ thereof; and teach every one, how they
 “ may expresse their faith, without any danger
 “ of mistake; saying, I give a full and un-
 “ doubting assent unto this; as to a *certain*
 “ *truth*, that when all the sufferings of Christ
 “ were finished on the cross, and his soul was
 “ separated from his body, though his body
 “ were dead, yet his soul died not; and though
 “ it died not, yet it underwent the condition of
 “ the souls of such as die; and being He died
 “ in the *similitude of a sinner*, his soul went to
 “ the place where the souls of men are kept
 “ who *die for their sins*, and so did wholly un-
 “ dergo the law of death. But because there
 “ was no sin in Him, and He had fully satis-
 “ fied for the sins of others which He took up-
 “ on Him, therefore as God suffered not his
 “ Holy One to see corruption, so He left not
 “ his soul in Hell; and thereby gave sufficient
 “ security to all those who belong to Christ,
 “ of never coming under the power of Satan,
 “ or suffering in the flames prepared for the
 “ devil and his angels. And thus, and for
 “ these purposes, may every Christian say, I be-
 “ lieve that Christ descended into Hell.”

And thus, if I mistake not, the principal
 point of difference between this learned Prelate,
 and those writers whose opinions he had refuted,

is this; that whereas they considered Christ's descent into Hell as respecting the souls of the Patriarchs, or of the damned which He *found* in the infernal regions; he considers it as operating *preventively* to the advantage of such as believe in Christ. I perfectly agree with his Lordship, in the pious use he makes of the doctrine, and the consolatory inferences he draws from the descent of Christ into Hell; but my conclusion follows from different premises. I see no necessity for supposing that He went down into Hell, in order to obtain those desirable and highly beneficial ends. He spoiled principalities and powers when He hung upon the accursed tree; and obtained a compleat deliverance for all his followers, from the guilt and punishment due to sin, by his atoning sacrifice, and propitiatory death. How else are we to understand Him, when He bowed his sacred head upon the cross, and in the language of a triumphant conqueror, said, "It is finished."

The judicious Dr. *Barrow* * in his exposition of the creed, seems fully convinced that the most probable sense of the Compilers, is utterly irreconcilable both with what he conceives to be the true sense of the original words, and with the more general opinion of the doctrine of Scripture upon this head. In treating on

* See *Barrow's Works*, Vol. I. p. 442—448. Edit. 1722.

this article he proposes a threefold inquiry;
 “ either concerning the meaning of the words
 “ (here set down) intended by those who in-
 “ ferted them; or concerning the most proper
 “ signification of the words themselves; or con-
 “ cerning the meaning they are with truth ca-
 “ pable of in the case, to which they here are
 “ applied.” The discussion of the first of these
 inquiries is that which alone concerns me; and
 on this point the Doctor expresses himself thus.

“ The first I resolve, says he, (or rather re-
 “ move) by saying; that it seems needless and
 “ endless to dispute what meaning they (which
 “ placed these words here) did intend; since,
 “ (1) it is possible (and might be declared so
 “ by many like instances) and perhaps not un-
 “ likely, that they might both themselves up-
 “ on probable grounds believe, and for plau-
 “ sible ends propound to the belief of others
 “ this proposition, without apprehending any
 “ distinct sense thereof; as we believe all the
 “ scriptures, and commend them to the faith
 “ of others, without understanding the sense of
 “ many passages therein. And since, (2) per-
 “ haps they might by them intend some notion
 “ not certain, or not true, following *some con-*
 “ *ceits then prevalent*, but not built upon any
 “ sure foundations. And since, (3) to speak
 “ roundly, their bare authority, whoever they
 “ were

“ were (for that doth not appear) could not be
“ such as to oblige us to be of their minds,
“ whatever they did mean or intend. We may
“ owe much *reverence*, but no *entire credence*
“ to their opinions. Yet (4) if I were bound
“ to speak my thought, I must confess; sup-
“ posing they had any distinct meaning, they
“ did mean to say, that our Saviour’s soul did
“ by a true and proper kind of motion, descend
“ into the regions infernal, or beneath the earth;
“ where they conceived the souls of men were
“ *detained*; for this appears to have been the
“ more general and current opinion of those
“ times, which it is probable they did comply
“ with herein, whencesoever fetched, however
“ grounded.”

It is plain from the Doctor’s exposition, that he did not understand the Compilers of the creed, as intending by the descent of Christ into Hell, merely his being in the state of death, or simply the passing of his soul into any place allotted to be the common receptacle of the souls both of good and bad; since he considers both these opinions distinctly, as belonging not to his *first*, but to the *second* and *third* inquiries he had proposed. What he means by the *conceits then prevalent*, and by the descent of Christ’s soul into the regions infernal, where the souls of men were *detained*, is farther illustrated by him at

the close of his exposition; where he mentions those conceits again, as referring to the old exploded doctrine, on which he passes a general censure.

Great credit is due to the opinion of Dr. *Barrow* upon this head; for all who are conversant with his writings must allow, that he was exceeded by few, if any, authors in solid good sense; and that his judgment upon ancient opinions always appears to be the result of diligent and accurate inquiry. Indeed the nature and turn of his genius would not allow him to treat any subject superficially. It may not be amiss just to add, that the Doctor's interpretation of the original words, as used in those scriptures on which the article is founded, is in favour of the supposition that they respect the body rather than the soul of Christ; and import no more than his being laid in the grave, or coming under the law, condition, and state of death. The reader may see the most solid arguments in favour of this opinion, very judiciously handled by this learned Divine.

But before I dismiss the consideration of the Doctor's exposition, I shall beg leave to subjoin a few additional remarks upon the *resolution*, (or as he himself rather terms it the *removal*) of his first inquiry.

1. I can by no means approve subscribing an assent, *ex animo*, to any human creed intended to hold forth a compendious view of the truths of Christianity, without apprehending any distinct sense of the doctrine it contains.

2. When it is granted, that those conceits were prevalent at the time when this article was inserted in the creed, there was no need to say, "*perhaps*" they were intended by the Compilers. The prevalence of such opinions at that time, is *demonstration* that they were intended. For if the creed had been designed to hold forth any doctrine inconsistent with those conceits, it would not have been accounted orthodox, nor have been received into the church. I will venture the justice of this inference upon an appeal to the general tenor of ecclesiastical history. The popular idea of heresy hath always been, that it is an opinion contrary to the generally received doctrine; and whatever opinion was so, whether right or wrong in itself, was equally censured as heretical, upon that much admired presumption in all ages, that the public judgment has the better chance to be right.

3. Though I readily allow, upon the grand principle of Protestantism, that the bare authority of the Compilers cannot oblige us to be of their minds; yet, through an unhappy inattention to this principle, the Church of England does require, *not only much reverence*, but,

an entire credence to her opinion of this doctrine, as stated in the creed, and adopted into her articles. And therefore the apprehension, that the sense of the creed differs from the sense of the Scripture, is an insuperable objection to subscribing to the truth of the article.

Many writers who disapprove the notion of Christ's descent into the place of torment, always interpret the creed in favour of that sense which they take to be most agreeable to Scripture; but upon no other authority than the unwarrantable presumption, that the creed and the scriptures must necessarily agree. Hence they intirely overlook, or totally disregard the abundant evidence in favour of a contrary supposition. Of the generality of such writers I have taken no notice; for the mere assertion of moderns, unsupported by the testimonies of antiquity, are no just rule of interpretation; and deserve no regard in determining the original meaning of the Compilers. It might perhaps however be thought disrespectful, not to pay some little attention to what a late Metropolitan of the Church of *England*, has advanced upon this subject. After having rejected the different exploded opinions of the sense of this Article, he adds; " And indeed the most common meaning not only among Heathens, but Jews, " and the first Christians, of the word *Hades*,
" here

Art. III. *the Meaning of this Clause.* 41

“ here translated *Hell*, was in general, that invisible world, one part or another of which, the souls of the deceased, whether good or bad, inhabit. And this how strange soever it may seem to the unlearned, yet is by others acknowledged.”—He then refers to Bp. *Pearson* on this Article. It follows, “ Probably therefore, all that was intended to be taught by the expression now before us, is, that when our Saviour died, as his body was laid in the grave, so his spirit went where other separate spirits are. And we should remember in repeating these words of the creed, that this is the *whole* of what we are bound to profess by them *.”

Here are positive conclusions, from at best very doubtful premises. The reference to Bishop *Pearson* will not countenance or warrant his Grace's inferences. That learned expositor, as we have already seen, does not represent the primitive sense or acceptation of the original words, as a sufficient authority for interpreting the creed in consistency with it; but on the contrary, produces numerous authorities for supposing this Article to have a very different meaning. There was therefore no foundation for his Grace's *probability*; and the inference drawn

* See Abp. *Secker's* Lectures on the Church Catechism, Edit. 3. p. 70, 71.

from

from that supposed probability, falls intirely to the ground. There is much more reason to believe and remember, in repeating these words of the creed, that those who would hold this Article in the sense of the Compilers, are bound to profess a belief in *much more* than his Grace will allow.

To sum up the evidence derived from that formula which is commonly called the Apostles creed. When I consider the abundant proof which the remains of Christian antiquity afford, that it was the opinion of the Fathers that Christ actually descended into a place of torment—— when I consider the curious controversies among them about his errand to *Hell*—— and reflect on the reverence which the Church of *Rome*, and the Church of *England* have ever paid to the decisions of the Fathers, I have not the least doubt remaining, that this was the meaning intended to be handed down from age to age, by the original Compiler or Compilers of the creed; and by those who have continued the standing use of it in the Church. Though I must observe by the way, that it therefore forfeits the honourable appellation it now bears; for surely this was no part of the Apostles creed.

I shall now proceed to examine the sentiments of some of the most considerable writers of the Church

Church of *England*, who have written upon the thirty-nine Articles themselves.

The learned Bishop *Burnet* rejects the literal sense of the Article as false in itself; but has no evidence to produce that this was not the sense of the Compilers. So far from it, that he says concerning the opinion of Christ's local descent into Hell, " This has one great advantage on its side, that those who first prepared the Articles in King *Edward's* time were of this opinion; for they made it a part of it, by adding in the Article, those words of St. *Peter*, 1 Pet. iii. 18, 19. as the proof or explanation of it. Now though that period was left out in Queen *Elizabeth's* time, yet no declaration was made against it; so that this sense was once in possession, and was never expressly rejected: Besides that, it has great support from the authority of many Fathers, who understood the *descent into Hell* according to this explanation *." Of the true scripture sense he thinks the words barely "capable." And how? Because the *Greek* word *Hades* was used in that large sense at the time of writing the New Testament, without giving the least intimation, that the *English* word *Hell* was used in the same comprehensive sense by the Compilers

* See Bp. *Burnet's* Introduction to his Exposition of the Articles, p. 10. Edit. 6. 8vo.

of the Articles, which was surely necessary to the proof. When he says at the close, "It is a good sense that may be well put on the words," he plainly means, merely because it is a good one in itself. Indeed so sensible is he of a defective proof that it is the real sense of the Article, that he takes occasion from the omission of the clause respecting Christ's *Burial*, in the first creeds wherein this Article was inserted, to allege that circumstance, together with *Ruffinus's* interpretation, for giving credit to the opinion, that it was substituted in the room of that clause; and originally understood to refer only to the interment of the body of Christ *. The idea of a latitude of interpretation of every controvertible Article, was a favourite idea with good Bp. *Burnet*. The fact seems to be, that this was the only expedient left, by which he could serve the purpose of that great Prelate, who first moved him to undertake his *Exposition*, consistently with what he had before advanced in his *History of the Reformation*, concerning the purport of Subscription †. In this critical situation, it was no wonder the work should turn out one of the most unsatisfactory products of learned labour, which the world ever saw. Insomuch that there was some truth as well as wit in Dr. *South's* remark,

* *Burnet's Exposition*, p. 72.
Vol. II. p. 169.

† *Hist. of Reform.*

That

That by this Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles, the Bishop had given the Church forty stripes save one. Whether the Right Reverend Author was himself perfectly satisfied with the principles on which he proceeded, is rather *uncertain*: but it is unquestionably *certain*, that he tried the utmost force of them for the accommodation of some scrupulous consciences. For this idea of a latitude of interpretation, perfectly labours in its operation throughout the whole Exposition, in order to reconcile men of different sentiments to a subscription to the Articles. And he brings this Article in particular, now under consideration, as a specimen of that latitude which the Church intended to allow. I have already given my sentiments in general upon this point; but think it necessary to consider what has been pleaded in favour of this Article, distinctly from the general ground of that presumption: which is this. That the alteration of the Article, as it now stands, from what it was in the Articles of *Edward* the Sixth, was *designedly* made to render it *ambiguous*, and to leave every man at liberty to put a different interpretation upon it, if more agreeable to his judgment.

I am indeed no competent judge of the good intentions of the Compilers; but the assertion appears to be rather the offspring of groundless

conjecture, than the testimony of a fact supported by authority. Such intentions however, if any such there were, were effectually frustrated by expressing the Article in the manner they have done; for since the word *Hell* had, as I conceive, undoubtedly a determinate signification in *common use*, and the declaration now binds to a subscription in the plain, literal, grammatical sense; no advantage can be taken, by an honest subscriber, of any designed ambiguity not *expressed* in the terms and phraseology of the Article. Nor is it easy to conceive, it would have been said, upon that supposition, that He *went down* into *hell*; for this seems plainly to mark the distinction between the state of the righteous and the wicked. Since of the former it was, at least, much more usual, if not the constant mode of expression at that time, to say, that their separate spirits *ascended* to dwell where Jesus dwells; who told his disciples, that He *ascended* unto his God and their God, and to his Father and their Father. If the opinion of Archbishop *Usher** be admitted, that the *Greek* word κατήλθεν, translated *descended*, signifies in some passages in the *Acts*, not a descent from an *higher* to a *lower* place, but a removing simply from one place to another; this cannot be said of the *English* word *descended*, or of the phrase, *He went down*; which always denote such a descent, either *strictly* or *figuratively*.

* *Usher's Answer to the Jesuit's Challenge*, p. 390.

And though it was the ancient opinion of Heathens, that the common receptacles of departed souls were under the earth, or in the heart or bowels thereof; yet Christians were very early taught to use a very different language.

But the whole of the supposition, seems to be founded on a mistaken view of the real fact. The Article of 1552 not only asserted that Christ went down into *Hell*, but also specified the *ends* of his descent *——Now the Compilers of the present Articles thought proper to leave us at liberty to determine for ourselves, about the *ends* for which He went down into *Hell*; (a controverted point among the Christian Fathers, and probably among themselves,) and retained only the more general assertion that *He did go there*, without specifying for what particular purpose. They *abridged* the Article it is allowed; but it is no fair inference, that therefore they *altered the sense* of what they *retained*. The more natural and probable conclusion lies the other way. And thus the inquiry turns out in favour of my hypothesis, instead of making any thing against it. It may not be improper here to observe,

* As Christ died and was buried for us, so also it is to be believed, that He went down into *Hell*; for the body lay in the sepulchre until the resurrection, but his ghost, departing from him, was with the ghosts that were in prison or in *hell*, and did preach to the same, in the place of *St. Peter* doth testify. Art. 3. A.D. 1552.

that

that a celebrated champion of the Church of *England*, describing the state of ecclesiastical affairs under Queen *Elizabeth*, thus expresses himself: "About the same time a review was made of the thirty-nine Articles, and some little variations made therein, to render the sense of them more determinate and clear *." This account does not consist with the supposition above considered.

To proceed to the consideration of some other commentators on the Articles.

Rogers, after producing several passages from Scripture, in proof of the proposition raised from the Article, "That Christ went down into Hell"—thus proceeds: "Also that Christ went down into Hell, all sound Christians both in former days, and now living, do acknowledge; howbeit in the interpretation of the Article there is not that consent as were to be wished: some holding, that Christ descended into Hell as God only, and not man—some as man only, and that, as some think, in body only, as others deem, in soul only—and others as God and man in one person." His references are to *Athanasius*, *Basil*, *Augustin*, and *Suevica*. However, among this variety of

* See Dr. *Nichols's* Defence of the Church of *England*, Edit. 1715. p. 23.

opinions as to the manner and ends, his actual descent into the place of torment for one purpose or another, is generally allowed. And so far is he from acknowledging the opinion now more commonly received, to be the doctrine of the Article; that he ranks those who held it, among the Adversaries to its truth*.

Dr. *Ellis* vindicates the opinion, that the Article now under consideration refers to Christ's real descent into *Hell*; which he thinks also to be the sense of Scripture. He states four objections to this doctrine, and returns such answers to them, as might be expected in defence of so absurd a supposition. His answer to the last, that, "It did not *become* Christ to honour those with his presence, who had been unworthy of his favour, and were eternally damned;" contains the fullest account of his own view of this subject. "It did, says he, *become* Christ, and for the demonstration of his justice and glory it was fitting, that he should present himself a conqueror to infernal spirits; that he might strike terror into Devils, and reproach the damned with their wickedness and folly. However it be, let us believe that Christ went down into Hell,

* See *Rogers's Faith, Doctrine, and Religion* professed and protected in the Realm of *England*, p. 15, 16. Edit. Camb. 1691.

“ though we are not plainly and fully satisfied
“ concerning the sense and manner of it *.

In the same sense is this Article interpreted by *Ford* †, Chaplain to the late Duke of *Whar-
ton*; in confirmation of which he urges several
passages from the Christian Fathers, some few
texts of Scripture, and Dr. *Ellis*’s solution of
the objections to this doctrine.

Dr. *Bennet* allows that the “ majority of the
“ Compilers were plainly of an opinion, which
“ is now generally exploded ;” though he would
fain persuade us, “ the Church so contrived the
“ Article on purpose, as that it might receive
“ different senses ‡.” Of such a contrivance
however, no other evidence appears from the
Doctor’s writings, but his own desire to make a
supposed *ambiguity* in this Article, a warrant
for the same latitude in interpreting any of the
rest, as convenience might require.

* *Decuit Christum, atque, ad demonstrationem justitiæ
& gloriæ suæ, æquum fuit, se victorem apud inferos exhi-
bere, ut diabolis terrorem incuteret, & damnatis nequitiam
& insipientiam objectaret. Utcunque se res habeat, cre-
damus nos Christum ad inferos descendisse, licet de sensu
& modo non tam planè & plenè constet. Vide Ellis Arti-
cul. defensionem. Edit. Amstel. 1700, p. 14.*

† *Vide Ford in Articulos Christianæ Religionis five
Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ, p. 14. Edit. Lond. 1720.*

‡ *Bennet ubi supra, Chap. 35. p. 441.*

The late Dr. *Waterland* once observed, that
 “ The sense of the Compilers and Imposers
 “ where certainly known must be religiously
 “ observed, even though the words were capa-
 “ ble of another sense *.” But when this as-
 sertion was pressed upon the Doctor in its full
 and just extent, it seemed likely to have de-
 prived him of that privilege, which he wished
 to enjoy himself, but denied to others. This
 obliged him to take shelter in his enemies quar-
 ters. For he was singularly happy in thinking,
 all the points contained in the Articles *which he*
believed, were fully *determined* by the Compilers;
 and that *just as many as he disbelieved*, were left
undetermined by them. Upon this principle,
 when the sense of the Compilers concerning
 Christ’s descent into *Hell* was urged against
 him, this was his reply, “ One thing is certain,
 “ that our Church has left that Article at large,
 “ intending a latitude; and indulging a liberty
 “ to subscribers to abound in their own sense †.”
 Upon which Mr. Archdeacon B——e makes
 the following pertinent and judicious remarks.

“ Here if you leave out the intention of the
 “ *Imposers* one thing is certain, that no lati-
 “ tude is left to the subscriber of the Article;
 “ the words *Hell* and *Inferi* never signifying

* Case of Arian Subscription, p. 17.

† *Waterland* ubi supra, p. 35.

“ any thing in the days of the Compilers, but
 “ the place of torment. If the intention of
 “ the Imposers is taken into the account, ano-
 “ ther thing is certain, that no liberty is allow-
 “ ed to subscribers to abound in their own sense,
 “ unless having deserted the sense of the Com-
 “ pilers, they absolutely neglect the intention
 “ of the Imposers, which may always be cer-
 “ tainly known *.”

A very sensible however heretodox Writer, who has lately opposed many of the Articles with great freedom, has taken notice of this, among others. He says he is “ sometimes inclined to believe, that the original Com-poser had not quite got rid of the Roman Catholic ideas of a purgatory.” So far I believe he is right. But he objects to the interpretation of the word *Hell* in the Article, as referring to the *final* state of punishment of the wicked, (which he accounts one proper signification of the word,) because he supposes no such state hath as yet existed. The doctrine more generally received of an *intermediate* state of conscious existence, he says, the Church has no where authoritatively asserted, and that the Holy Scriptures are quite silent about it. The only other sense of the word, besides that of

* Confessional, p. 152. Edit. 1766.

the *final* state of punishment, he supposes to be the *Grave*; and therefore concludes "the proposition in question, to be a mere foolish unmeaning repetition of the burial of Jesus Christ: because, says he, I had much rather our Article-makers should be found to be ridiculous only, than criminally presumptuous *."

This conclusion has so much the appearance of an ironical satire, that it is hardly necessary to shew on what a sandy foundation it is built. Otherwise it might be properly suggested, that the Compilers faith is not to be determined either by the faith, or by the unbelief of this Author. That they did not use the word *Hell* to signify the state of torment, can never be proved by his saying, he does not believe any such state hath as yet existed. It is on the contrary certain, that they did believe in the doctrine of an intermediate state. And farther, the Church did once *authoritatively assert* that doctrine, in the fortieth of K. *Edward's* Articles, which is thus expressed. "They which say that the souls of such as depart hence do sleep, being without all sense, feeling, or perceiving until the day of judgment; or affirm that the souls die with the bodies, and at the last day shall be raised up with the same, do ut-

* See Doctrine of a Trinity, &c. p. 108.

“terly dissent from the right belief declared
 “unto us in holy Scripture.” Nor do I think
 we have any just reason to conclude, that the
 Church has renounced the *belief* of every thing
 which was omitted, at the revival of the Arti-
 cles in Q. *Elizabeth's* reign.

I shall close my inquiry into the sense of this
 Article, by taking the evidence of Bishop *Beveridge* ; a very learned and pious man, and be-
 yond all controversy, a true Son of the Church.
 His Lordship thus introduces his Comment * ,
 “ Though this Article be in itself as clear and
 “ certain as any of the rest, yet men having ex-
 “ ercised their fancies so variously upon it, have
 “ drawn, as it were, a veil over it, and so eclips-
 “ ed the light of it; and hence it is, that some
 “ do not rightly understand it, others scruple it,
 “ yea and others, do in plain terms contradict
 “ and gainsay it. That the first of these may
 “ be taught the truth concerning it, the second
 “ resolved about it, and the third convinced
 “ of their error in denying it, I shall first lay
 “ down some propositions to clear it, and then
 “ proceed to the confirmation of it.”

After making many concessions, “ that the
 “ *Greek* and *Latin* words which we translate, *He*
 “ *descended into Hell*, may” in themselves “ admit
 “ of another interpretation than what in this

* See Bp. *Beveridge's* Exposition, p. 69—86. Edit. 1711.
 “ transla-

“ translation of them we put upon them;” he enters upon the proof that “ the word *Hades*” as it stands in the Creed, “ cannot by any means admit of any other signification than what is put upon it when it is translated *Hell*.” But “ however, says he, such an interpretation (i. e. taking the word in a general sense,) may be forced upon this Article as it stands in the Apostles Creed; yet we are sure there can be no such sense put upon it, as it is here delivered as the doctrine of the *Church of England*.” He not only takes the *literal* to be the true sense of the Article, but also the true doctrine of *Scripture*. With all the pomp of literature he fights for this exploded notion. He appeals to *Scripture*, to *Reason*, and to *Church authority* for the proof. In reference to the testimony from *Scripture*, he observes upon the passage in *St. Peter*, that the interpretation he contends for, “ was so generally received in the primitive Church, that they did not in that sincere age seek out for any other, but took this to be the undoubted meaning of the place; so that to name the place to them was a sufficient proof of the thing.” He ascribes it to the degeneracy and greater infidelity of the times, that it was not thought so by later ages. “ I am sure, says he, the ancient *Syriack*, *Arabick*, and *Æthiopick* translation seem clearly to carry the sense that way.”

In support of the same doctrine he introduces, and comments on many other passages *. From Scripture he proceeds to *Reason*, and argues thus. "The soul of Christ after its separation from the body, and before his resurrection from the dead, was either in Heaven or in Hell; but it was not in Heaven, therefore it must needs have been in Hell. That the soul of Christ, when separated from the body, did not immediately go up to Heaven," he proves thus, First,

"That the Lord Christ, both while living, and when dying, was still accounted as a sinner."—"And he thus dying as a sinner, cannot in reason be thought to go whither saints, but whither sinners go when dead. His body that was laid where the bodies of sinners are, in the grave; and so his soul, it is fitting, that should go whither the souls of sinners go, to Hell."—"The ends to be answered by his descent were, (1.) That he might undergo the state and condition of a dead, as well as of a living sinner. (2.) That he might give us security for our pardon and redemption from Hell. And (3.) his soul did principally go to Hell, and remained there whilst his body was in the grave, that so it might

* Acts ii. 24. Eph. iv. 9. Rom. x. 6. Psalm xvi. 10. Acts ii. 31.

“ be in a state of humiliation, as well and as
“ long as his body.”

Hence he derives his second reason, “ Why
“ we are not to think the Soul of Christ went
“ to Heaven, but to Hell ; because, if his
“ soul had ascended to Heaven, as his body de-
“ scended into the grave, then one part of his
“ human nature had been exalted, whilst the
“ other was debased.”

A third reason he derives from a declaration
of our Saviour himself, “ who best knew when
“ he first ascended up to Heaven, and tells
“ us plainly, the third day after his death, be-
“ ing the day of his resurrection, that he was
“ not then ascended up to Heaven, saying to
“ *Mary, Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended*
“ *to my Father* *.”

“ Whence, says he, we cannot but judge,
“ that if we weigh things in the equal balance
“ of unbiaſſed reason, we muſt needs believe,
“ That the ſoul of Chriſt when breathed from
“ his body upon his croſs on earth, went not
“ up to his crown in Heaven, but ſtaid in Hell
“ until the time it was to be united to its body
“ again.”

His Lordſhip then briefly conſiders the ob-
jections to this ſenſe, and afterwards proceeds

* John xx. 17.

to shew, how consistent this interpretation of the Article is, with the judgment of the Ancient Christian writers.

“ Neither, says he, is this a truth of yesterday's growth, but almost all the Fathers of the primitive Church have acknowledged and received it as an article of their faith. Though they much differ about the end of his going, yet that he did go thither they all agree. Some said he went to preach there, others to loose such as himself thought fit, others to triumph over his conquered enemy the Devil; but all affirm, that he did go to Hell. But passing by many others, I shall only impanel one Jury of them, that bring in their verdict for this truth.”

“ And the Foreman is *Ignatius*. Then follow *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Tertullian*, *Athanasius*, *St. Hilary*, *St. Ambrose*, *St. Basil*, *St. Jerome*, *Macarius*, *Fulgentius*, *Anastasius Sinaita*, and *St. Augustin*.”

“ Seeing therefore that Scripture is so clear for it, seeing Reason also subscribeth to it, seeing so little or nothing can be brought against it, and seeing a whole Jury of Fathers, besides others, give their verdict for it, we cannot but conclude, *That as Christ died for*

“ us

" *us and was buried, so also is it to be believed
that He went down into Hell.*"

I shall only remark, that, if these Jurymen had been now living, and summoned to give their opinion, whether this was the sense of the third Article of the Church of *England*, I should have been perfectly satisfied with their verdict; for I think this matter is now put beyond all reasonable doubt. But considered as a proof that it is the doctrine of the Bible, I make no scruple to add, that Judge and Jury are all in the wrong. To conclude; on this account the most orthodox Protestant Dissenter may reasonably object to subscribing this article. And though some of my Brethren * may not dare to indulge any doubts about its *truth*, nor at all to hesitate about its *importance*; I leave doubting and hesitation far behind me here.

ARTICLE IV.

CHRIST did truly rise again from death; and took again his body, with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith He ascended into Heaven, and there sitteth until He return to judge all men at the last day.

* See the Apology for, the Renewal of an Application, &c. p. 45.

According to the literal sense, and plain grammatical construction of this Article, it should seem that our exalted Saviour ascended into Heaven, and there sitteth with that body of flesh and bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, in precisely the same state, in which He reassumed his body upon his resurrection from the dead.

But this literal sense is not consistent with the doctrine of Scripture.

It is indeed admitted that in some respects, and in a true and proper sense, the glorified body of Christ is the same in which He tabernacled among men. But whatever it is which constitutes the identity, we are sure it is such a sameness as is consistent with many great and advantageous alterations. The sameness of the human body in the present life, is not founded upon an unchangeable permanency in its state, during all the different stages of life; but rather upon the same invariable relation and union which we have with it, under all the changes arising from the perpetual flux in the animal system. And we are taught to expect much greater alterations in the bodies we shall receive in the morning of the resurrection—such alterations as are suited to the different nature and circumstances of the future state—and as to true Christians,

Art. IV. *Article inconsistent with Scripture.* 61

Christians, such as shall manifest that the bodies of the saints were a part of the purchased possession, and shall have a share in the benefits of redemption through the blood of Jesus. The apostle *Paul* has given us a beautiful description of this change, and of the consistency of it with the individual sameness of the body laid in the dust, with that which shall be raised in the last day *. This he illustrates by various metaphors, and particularly by that of the seed sown in the ground ; which, after being duly macerated, springs up out of the earth in a different form from the bare grain, but preserves at the same time a constant relation and affinity to its own particular species. He then draws the analogous contrast between the body as laid in the grave, and raised up in the great day. " It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption ; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory ; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power ; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body."

With respect to such as shall not fall asleep or see death, he asserts the necessity of an equal change ; laying it down as an unquestionable truth, that " flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God ; neither, says he, doth corruption inherit incorruption." Wherefore he assures the *Corinthians*, that " in a mo-

* 1 Cor. xv. 36 & seq.

" ment,

“ment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the
 “found of the last trumpet, they shall all be
 “changed.”

Now it is observable, that while the Apostle represents the mortality of the body, as the effect of our relation to the first *Adam*, and as bearing his *image*; he also represents this glorious change taking place in a resurrection from the dead, or by a momentary exertion of divine power, upon those who shall be alive at the coming of the Lord, as the effect of a relation to Christ the second *Adam*, and as bearing *his image*. In like manner he elsewhere describes true Christians, as looking “for a Saviour, the
 “Lord Jesus Christ, who shall *change* our vile
 “body, that it may be fashioned like, or be
 “conformable unto his own glorious body *.”

Thus it appears, that Christ's glorified body is both the *pledge* and *pattern* of the glorification of the bodies of the saints. And since we are expressly taught to conceive of this alteration in *their* bodies, as preceding the admission of them into Heaven: it is reasonable to suppose, that the body of our blessed *Saviour* underwent the same glorious change in a moment, in the course of his ascension, after that He was received up into the clouds out of the sight of his

* Phil. iii. 21.

disciples; but before He entered on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Consequently it cannot be true, neither does it consist with the Apostle's assertion, that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," to say that Christ ascended into Heaven with his *flesh* and *bones*, and all things appertaining to the perfection (or rather the present imperfection) of man's nature. Much less can we allow, that He now therewith sitteth until He shall return to judge all men at the last day; to which idea the most natural construction of the Article would also lead us.

A Writer, to whom I have before referred *, imagines it is not only the doctrine of the Church, that our *Saviour's* body did not undergo a change before his ascension into Heaven; but likewise that the bodies of the *Saints* shall be precisely the same at the resurrection, which they were before. The literal sense of the Article (in which we are bound to subscribe it) undoubtedly holds forth the first of these erroneous tenets; but I conceive his authorities are insufficient to support the latter assertion. I would do no wrong to the judgment of the Church, and will be an advocate for her against every unjust reflection cast upon her doctrines. The phrase in the creed, teaching us to believe in the resurrection

* Vide supra, p. 52.

of the *body*, does not militate against the supposition of a *change* produced in it; neither does that in the baptismal office, which calls it the resurrection of the *flesh*, and which he deems an explication of the former. In both these places, the *body* and the *flesh* only stand opposed to the *soul*, and intimate a resurrection of the *mortal* part, as distinguished from that which is *immortal*. That Gentleman might have recollected, that his own private opinion of the sleep of the soul in the grave, and the resurrection of it in the great day, is not the avowed doctrine of the Church of *England*. But his predilection for that sentiment, seems to have given rise to an uncandid interpretation of the creed and baptismal office.

Bp. Burnet was aware of the impropriety in the expression of this Article, and therefore speaks of it as a thing questioned, whether the body of Christ was changed, or whether it retains still the same form in heaven which it had on earth. He inclines to the former opinion as most probable and scriptural, but not as being the plain literal sense of the Article*.

I have only one observation more to make upon this Article, in favour of those who believe in the doctrine of the Millennium, or expect the personal reign of Christ on the earth. I shall

* *Burnet's Exposition*, p. 82,

Art. IV. *Believers in the Millennium considered.* 63

not enter into the inquiry whether this is, or is not the doctrine of Scripture. Let it only be remembered, that it is an opinion which has been held by many Calvinists, as well as by persons suspected of heresy on other controverted points. It is certainly a tenet perfectly innocent in itself, and pregnant with no injurious consequences to civil society; and therefore it may justly be accounted a hardship, that a man should be denied the benefit of a legal toleration on account of believing it. But every honest man of this persuasion, however cordially he may approve of subscription to human creeds in general, and of all the rest of the doctrines contained in the thirty-nine Articles, must be deprived of that benefit, if he carefully attends to the last clause of this Article, which asserts Christ's continuance in Heaven, until He return to judge all men at the last day. Whereas the advocates for the Millennium, look for his descent from Heaven a thousand years before the arrival of that important period. I am inclined to think some zealous opponents of relief in the matter of subscription, are considerably interested in this difficulty.

ART. I.
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ARTICLE VI.

In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.

This remarkable definition of Holy Scripture brings the Subscriber into a difficult dilemma. For he must either declare he believes this assertion to be true, of all the books received as canonical, and inserted in the list affixed to this Article, which was the evident design of the Compilers; and so offend against the clearest evidence of ecclesiastical history to the contrary. Or, if he strictly adheres to the Church's definition of Holy Scripture, and consequently admits no other books to be canonical, than those of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church, he cannot conscientiously subscribe to the canonical authority of *all* the books enumerated in the catalogue, which is subjoined to the Article; and which it was also the evident design of the Compilers should be received as such. For it is impossible it can be true, that all the books contained in that list are to be esteemed canonical, and yet none but those of which there never was any doubt. For my own part,

part, I both admire and adore the wisdom of Providence, which hath often over-ruled the doubts of men about the truth of revelation in general, of particular books of Scripture, and of particular doctrines contained in those books, so as to become the occasion of the more effectually establishing their divine authority. And although it is undeniable, that the authority of several of the books of Scripture has been doubted and disputed; yet the objections to that authority have been sufficiently and solidly answered. Not to mention any particular books of the Old Testament, the general authority of which is established by the New; it is well known, the epistle to the *Hebrews* (that most excellent and evangelical comment upon the Levitical priesthood) was early called in question, as were also the epistle of *St. James*, the 2d of *St. Peter*, the 2d and 3d of *St. John*, that of *St. Jude*, and the *Revelation*. Hence the distinction of the books of the New Testament by ancient ecclesiastical historians, into *ὁμολογούμενοι* and *ἀντιλεγόμενοι*; the former denoting such as had been universally received; and the latter those, the authority of which had been disputed; though they were at length introduced into the canon, after the most careful examination of their genuineness, and upon the most satisfactory evidence of their divine original. But if we allow the Definition of Holy Scripture

given in this Article, to be a just and accurate one; we must yet conclude they are not canonical, and were not written under the same divine inspiration with the rest. Bishop *Burnet* had surely forgotten his Logick, when he urged as a distinct particular in his proof, that all the books of the New Testament now received are canonical, according to the Church's definition of canonical authority; "That some question
 " was made touching some of them, because
 " there was not that clear or general knowledge
 " concerning them, that there was concerning
 " the others; yet upon fuller inquiry all ac-
 " quiesced in them †." As if a satisfaction resulting from a fuller inquiry, occasioned by *previous doubts*, proved that no such doubts ever existed. Bishop *Beveridge* has kept this difficulty out of sight, by expounding the Article as it was framed 1552; for the clause I have considered, was first inserted in 1562, at the time of the revival of the Articles.

It is remarkable, that the canonical Books are named and numbered in this Article, according to the division of the *Vulgate Bible*; which includes the Book of *Lamentations* in the Prophecy of *Jeremiah*, and calls the Books of *Ezra*, and *Nehemiah*, the 1st and 2d of *Esdra*s. The absurdity of suffering the List to continue in this form, when another division of the Bible

† *Burnet*, ubi supra, p. 99.

Art. VIII. *on the Names of the Canonical Books.* 69

came into common use, must be obvious to every Reader.—But it was *established*; and alterations in establishments are dangerous. It is hardly to be doubted however, that in consequence of this unaltered Establishment, many persons have ignorantly subscribed to the canonical authority of two *Apocryphal Books*—the only Books which now pass under the title of the 1st and 2d of *Esdras*.

A R T I C L E VIII.

THE three Creeds, Nice Creed, Athanasius's Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed; for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Scripture.

Now with submission to the judgment of the Church, I conceive there is no necessity that any one of them should be *thoroughly* received and believed—that it is impossible that they can all be so received by the same person—and that the Creed of *Athanasius* with its damnatory clause, ought to be rejected by every believer in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. Nor is it any great offence against the Church to say so, if we consider the latter clause of the Article. She therein confesses, that the reason why they should be so received, is, because they may be

proved by most certain warrants of Scripture. Now if the reason urged for injoining such belief cannot be supported, she ought upon her own principles, to renounce this claim upon the consciences of Christians.

What has already been alleged in the preceding review of the third Article, is sufficient to shew why I think that the creed commonly, but falsely called the Apostles, need not and ought not to be *thoroughly* received. Many writers, and among them some Dignitaries of the Church of *England*, have agreed with Dissenters in believing, that Christ's real descent into Hell, cannot be proved by any certain warrant of Scripture.

In the beginning of the fourth century, A.D. 325. *Constantine the Great* summoned a general council to meet at *Nice*, a city in *Bithynia*, to settle the disputes about the proper time for the observation of *Easter*, and to prevent the propagation of the principles of *Arius*. At this council three hundred and eighteen Bishops and Presbyters assembled, who at length agreed upon a certain explication of the doctrine of the Trinity, called from the place of their meeting, the *Nicene Creed*. This was afterwards considerably enlarged, as it now stands, by the council of *Constantinople*. Some

of the more wise and moderate members of the council of *Nice* perceived the great difficulty likely to arise, from the multitude of questions which were started in the debate, and the variety of judgments concerning the most proper phrases to be adopted, in explaining so sublime a doctrine. They therefore gave it as their opinion, "that no innovation should be made in matters of Faith; but that it should be still entertained with the same naked simplicity, wherewith from the beginning it had been delivered to the Church; men of simple and honest minds," says Dr. *Cave**, not thinking it fit, that articles concerning God should be made the subject of subtle, and over-curious disputes." But this prudent advice was over-ruled by some other members of the Council, and principally through the influence of *Athanasius*, whose own private ends (cloaked under the specious disguise of a zeal for the truth) would have been effectually frustrated, if the scriptural phrases had been determined to be preferable to the words of mens invention. By whom the Creed was drawn up may perhaps admit of dispute; but some writers have ascribed it without the least hesitation to *Hosius* Bishop of *Corduba*, and I shall not call in question his title to this honour. It may however be justly questioned, whether this Creed

* *Cave's* Acts and Proceedings of the Council of *Nice*, in his Life of *Athanasius*, § 3.

may not with more propriety be subscribed by *Arians*, than by such as are now called *Atbanasians*. The phrase made use of in the description of the divinity of our Lord, has been thought by some Trinitarians, to be totally inconsistent with the idea of his true and proper Deity. It professes a belief in Him as Θεὸς ἐκ Θεοῦ, God of God, one God derived from, and dependent upon another God for his existence.—The phrase is not used in respect to any subordination of office, but in reference to his Being and divine nature. But since one of the first ideas of the Deity, is, that of an *unoriginated, uncaused, self-existent, and independent Being*; many advocates for the Deity of our Lord, are of opinion, that if the unity of the Godhead be maintained, there can be no such thing as a very God of very God. And that to speak of a God by *derivation*, is confessedly denying that self-existence to the Son, which is one of the distinguishing attributes of supreme Deity*. If I was an *Arian* in judgment, I should

* A learned Advocate for the *Nicene* faith, represents it as the opinion of that council, and as the unanimous judgment of the *Ante* and *Post Nicene* Fathers, that the Son was *not* *unoriginatus*. But on the contrary, that they held the subordination of the Son to the Father, *ut ad sui originem ac principium*—that the Son did not possess the divine nature and perfections of the Father *collateraliter, aut coordinatè, sed subordinatè*—that the Father was *fons, origo, ac principium*,

I should have no objection to the phraseology of this Creed. It is therefore to me no wonder, that the followers of *Arius* so readily subscribed it. The only objection which they had at first to that subscription, arose from the use of the word *consubstantial*, which they thought unscriptural, and seemed to convey to their minds the idea of corporeal affections, "as if the Son

"did subsist of his Father by some kind of *pium, divinitatis quæ in Filio est*—that He alone was *ἀπαρχὴ*—that He was to the Son *αἰτίαν τῆς εἰσεως*, the cause of his existence.—That it was customary with them to call the Father *Διακριτικῶς*, sometimes "God absolutely," sometimes "That one God," and at other times, "The God and Father of all;" because the Father only was God of Himself, the Son God of God.—Hence, they said, the Son was only called God, in the same manner as a Ray, considered apart from the Sun, is called the Sun. The Bishop seemed apprehensive of some inconsistency between several of these expressions, and the doctrine of the Co-eternity of the Son, which he had before laboured to prove was the doctrine of the *Nicene Council*. But he was relieved from his difficulty by some curious extracts from the Fathers, the purport of which is to prove, that the Son's having a beginning, is very consistent with his having no beginning.—One of them says, *τὸ μὲν ἀπαρχὸν καὶ αἰδίσιον τὸ δὲ αἰδίσιον ὁ πάντως ἀπαρχὸν*. And who, upon the principles of Scripture or common sense, shall dare to dispute the authority of *Gregory Nazianzen*? Vide *Bulli Defensionem Fidei Nicænæ*, Sect. 4. Cap. 1. Edit. Oxon. 1685.

From the passages above quoted, it is fully evident, that those who believe Self-existence to be an essential attribute of Deity, cannot imagine *true* Deity to be ascribed to our Blessed Lord in the *Nicene Creed*.

" section

“ section or division; whereas they thought it
 “ impossible that an immaterial, intellectual,
 “ and incorporeal nature should admit any cor-
 “ poreal passion. But they thought it very just
 “ and reasonable to assent to it, when the epi-
 “ thet was explained to signify no more, than
 “ that the Son of God had no kind of similitude
 “ with any creatures, but was only, and in all
 “ things like unto this Father that begat Him,
 “ nor of any other subsistence or essence, but
 “ of the Father *.” When the Emperor’s re-
 sentment against *Arius*, was moderated by the
 intercession of some of his friends, he was recalled
 from his banishment into *Illyricum*, upon con-
 dition of his subscription to the Faith established
 in the *Nicene* Council. The Emperor’s Let-
 ter to him upon this occasion, was both very
 respectful and very affectionate. *Arius* com-
 plied with the invitation to court, and presented
 to the Emperor a confession of his faith, in the
 name of himself, and his fellow-sufferer *Euzoius*,
 in which he declares—“ We believe in one God
 “ the Father Almighty, and in our Lord Jesus
 “ Christ his Son, begotten of Him before all
 “ ages, being God the Word, by whom all things

* See *Eusebius’s* (Bishop of *Cæsarea*) Letter to the people
 of *Cæsarea*; written to convince those who inclined to
Arius’s principles, that nothing had been determined by
 the Council contrary to them; and that he had not betrayed
 their cause by subscribing the *Nicene* Creed.

“ were

" were made both in Heaven and Earth *." The Emperor was perfectly satisfied; but *Atbanasius* was irreconcilable to the restoration of *Arius*. The reason of his inflexible opposition, sprang, I fear, from the ambition of obtaining the Bishoprick of *Alexandria*, rather than from a disinterested zeal for the truth. When the Emperor found his mediation with *Atbanasius* proved unsuccessful, he referred *Arius's* confession of Faith, to the judgment of the Synod at *Jerusalem*. They decreed that *Arius* and his adherents should be received into communion; and persuaded the Church of *Alexandria* kindly to entertain them, whose Faith the Emperor had pronounced to be *sound* and *orthodox*. As to the charge of hypocrisy upon *Arius*, it does not appear to be well supported by any authentick testimony; and it is to be presumed, that he would have acted a very different part, if he had been addicted to the arts of dissimulation. But it is too common among mankind, to suppose *every thing* that is bad, of a man that is branded with heresy.

It may indeed seem strange, that a Creed professedly drawn up with a view of preventing the propagation of Arianism, should be expressed in such terms, that Arians could conscientiously subscribe it. But it should be re-

* Socrat. L. 26. Soz. H. 27. mem-

membered, not only that the Creed itself abundantly justifies their subscription; but also that the members of the Council, appear to have been totally unqualified by their heats and animosities, for attending to the propriety of their expressions. Their attention was wholly diverted from the point in dispute, by the bitterness and warmth of personal altercations. I can assure the reader, there is nothing *un-calvinistical* in this assertion, for *Calvin* himself has expressed the same sentiment in the strongest terms; and drawn a picture of the Council, which better answers the description of a lawless mob of brutal Russians, than of an assembly of Christian Divines. He speaks of their conduct as almost warranting the supposition, that it was *ordained* for the gratification of *Arius*, by their giving way to his opinions*.

In

* He reckons up four causes or occasions of the errors and mistakes of the purest Councils; and illustrates the influence of the last, by the conduct of the Council of *Nice*, in the following words.

Vel quodd nimio affectu nonnunquam precipites ferebantur. Hujus postremi (quod omnium durissimum videtur) exemplum illustre extitit in Nicena Synodo: cujus dignitas omnium consensu summa veneratione, ut merebatur, excepta est. Nam quum primum fidei nostræ caput illic periclitaretur, adesset hostis *Arrius* in procinctu, quo cum manus conferendæ essent, summum verò momentum in eorum concordia esset qui ad oppugnandum *Arrii* errorem paratè venerant: ipsi nihilominus tantorum disci-

Art.VIII. *accounted for, and farther illustrated.* 77

In farther proof of the *heterodoxy* of the Nicene Creed, I cannot but remark, that all the orthodox writers of the Church of *England*, with Dr. *Waterland* at their Head, have not scrupled to censure the late celebrated Dr. *Clarke* of St. *James's* as an Arian, and heterodox member of the Church of *England*. And yet his scheme is perfectly consonant with the Nicene Creed, and founded on the idea therein delivered of the derivation and dependance of the Son. When therefore recourse was had to Church authority, the Doctor found a secure and inpregnable retreat in the judgment of the Nicene Fathers. Nor can I see why a clergyman who believed in the Nicene Creed, and rejected the

discriminum securi, imò velut gravitatis, modestiæ, & omnis humanitatis obliti, omisso quod in manibus erat certamine (quasi ex destinato, Arrio gratificaturi, eo concessissent) intestinis dissidiis sese proscindere cæperunt: Et stylum qui in Arrium stringendus erat, in seipsos dirigere. Fædæ criminationes audiebantur: libelli accusatorii volitabant: nec contentionum finis ullus factus esset, donec mutuis vulneribus se confodissent, nisi Imperator Constantinus occurrisset, qui inquisitionem in eorum vitam, rem esse supra suam cognitionem professus, talem intemperiem laude magis quàm objurgatione castigavit. Quàm multis partibus & alia quæ deinde sequuta sunt Concilia lapsa fuisse verissimile est? Nec longâ demonstratione opus hæc res habet: si quis enim acta perlegat, multas illic infirmitates animadvertet: nequid dicam gravius. *Calvin.* Instit. Lib. iv. Cap. ix. § 10. Edit. Lug. Bat. 1654.

Atha-

Athanasian, had not as much reason to consider himself as a true Son of the Church; as another who believed in the Athanasian, and rejected the Nicene Creed; seeing the Church of *England* enjoins the belief of the one, as well as of the other. Indeed of the two the former has the better claim, if the calculation of an anonymous writer may be depended on, who asserts, that "there are one hundred and eighty six places in the Liturgy, where the phrases favour the Nicene doctrine; and but twenty seven places where they lean to the doctrine of the Athanasian Creed*."

A learned foreigner is of the same mind with myself. "Dr. *Clarke's* doctrine, says he, seems to be the same with that of the Nicene Council, excepting that he uses not the word *consubstantial*. It is not therefore to be wondered, that he should have produced so many passages from the ancient Fathers in favour of his hypothesis. They who pretend that the Nicene Council should be the rule of our Faith, ought by no means to censure Dr. *Clarke*, if they understand what that Council meant†."

* Impartial account of the Rise both of Arianism and Athanasianism, P. 56. Note.

† *Le Clerc*. Bibl. Chois. xxvi. 419.

I shall

I shall now enter on the consideration of the Athanasian Creed, which this Article also requires us *thoroughly* to receive and believe. This Creed has been held equally sacred with the Scriptures, partly from its supposed high antiquity, partly on account of the name of its reputed Author; but principally on account of its incomprehensible darkness, and the danger of incurring the penalty of eternal damnation, by entertaining any doubts about it. So that the most zealous Trinitarian, who would rather take his Bible than this Creed for an infallible guide, had need to deprecate the resentments of angry Bigots, infatuated with a superstitious attachment to Church authority. But notwithstanding the pretensions of its former Advocates for a very high antiquity, the learned criticisms of succeeding writers have detected the forgery; fully proved it to be of a much later date, and not improbably the composition of the *Orthodox* Church of *Rome*, many (if not some hundred) years after the death of *Athanasius*. Though it still continues to bear his name, and is yet imposed upon the Church as the Creed of *Athanasius*; Cardinal *Bona*, Dr. *Comber*, and Bishop *Beveridge*, are the only writers of any note who can be called modern, that have ventured to ascribe it to him. Even Dr. *Waterland*, who contended for every tittle of it as if it was divine, was forced to give up this point, and ascribed

cribed it to *Hilary of Arles*. Nor did he attempt to carry its date any farther back, than the beginning of the fifth century*. It would be a fruitless inquiry to examine how far there is any certainty as to the Author. Our business is with the Creed itself, rather than its Compiler. But it is sufficiently clear that *Athanasius* was not. The imposition of his name upon it, was probably one of the pious frauds of the Church of *Rome*, in order to secure the greater credit and reputation to it in the world. And since it is a fact that by bearing his name, and being considered at least as conformable to the views he had of the doctrine of the Trinity, it has been held in much the greater veneration; I think this a proper place for the inquiry, how far his opinion ought to have prejudiced our minds in its favour. He has been usually honoured as an Apostle, and styled a Saint. But it is a scruple of conscience with me to call a man so, who appears to have been only deserving of such an appellation, in the Roman Calendar. How well founded this opinion is, I shall submit to the determination of the impartial reader, when he has perused the character of *Athanasius*, as drawn by a learned Prelate—a character too well supported by the history of

* See *Waterland's Critical History of the Athanasian Creed* Chap. 7, 8.

the times, to admit any suspicion of injustice done to the memory of the reputed Saint.

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To

The character is thus introduced, in a speech before a great Assembly on the subject of the Athanasian Creed.

But then it may probably be asked, How comes it to bear the name of *Athanasius*? The answer to which is, because it agrees perfectly with the Athanasian doctrine; and had the name of *Athanasius* affixed to it by the Church of *Rome*, because he was a person much esteemed by that Church, and whose principles, as well political as religious, the members of that Church have long laboured to propagate among mankind: But, as the true character of this *Athanasius* is not commonly known; and therefore some of your Lordships may possibly be unacquainted with it, I shall beg leave to inform you who, and what he was.

Athanasius was a young, forward, petulant Deacon in the Church of *Alexandria*, of an ambitious spirit, with a talent fitted for disputation: and as he could have no hopes of getting into that Bishoprick, unless he could drive *Arius* out of *Alexandria*, who was the principal Presbyter in that Church next to the Bishop; this he effected, by fomenting this dispute about the Trinity, between *Arius* and the Bishop; on which account, having got *Arius* excommunicated, he had him then banished out of *Alexandria*: Which when done, no sooner was the old Bishop *Alexander* dead, but *Athanasius*, though then only a young man, of about 27 or 28 years of age, by the assistance of a set of murdering *Ascetics*, forced himself at once into that high Archbishoprick, without ever passing through any of the intermediate degrees: And having gotten himself illegally consecrated, contrary to all the rules and canons of the Church, he prevailed on the Emperor *Constantine* to confirm him therein, by the power of bribes, that were given to one of the Emperor's

82 *Additional Evidence that Athanasius* ART. VIII.

To return to the Creed itself. There is one remarkable presumptive proof that *Athanasius* was

“favourites: and no sooner was he thoroughly established
“in it, but he immediately flew in the Emperor’s face.
“And when the Emperor *Constantine the Great* was dead,
“treated his son and successor *Constantius*, with more con-
“tempt and insolence than could have been borne from an
“equal. And when he was dispossessed of his Bishoprick
“for other irregularities, by a numerous Council of Bi-
“shops, regularly summoned and assembled, he forced his
“way into that See again, more than once or twice, over
“the murdered corpses of his antagonists; and waded into
“his Cathedral through seas of blood.

“But it may perhaps be farther asked, Why should this
“recommend him to the See of *Rome*? The reason of
“which is, because this was all done by the connivance,
“and with the concurrence of that See: *Athanasius*, while
“he treated all the rest of mankind, and even his own
“Royal Master, with the utmost insolence, having paid a
“servile court to the Papal Chair. Insomuch that in the
“books of the Canon Law, the first precedent that is, or
“can be produced in support of the Papal Supremacy, is
“this instance of the servile subjection that was paid by
“*Athanasius* to Pope *Julius*. And therefore, I should ap-
“prehend, that all Protestants, who have renounced the
“supremacy of the Pope, and the independency of the
“Church upon the State, ought to be for obliterating the
“name of *Athanasius* out of their Liturgy, into which it
“was probably inserted, only with a view of recommend-
“ing his political principles, under the shelter and in-
“fluence of his religious doctrines.” Bishop of *Clogher*’s
Speech made in the House of Lords in *Ireland*, Feb. 2,
1756.

The irregularities for which *Athanasius* was deposed, and to which this learned Prelate alludes, were not of a trivial nature.

was not the author of it; which the writers in defence of the Creed and the Article have not thought proper to mention, though it has been suggested by others *. This is derived from the consideration, that *Athanasius* was a member of the council of *Nice*, and from the inconsistency of the language of the *Athanasian Creed*, with the expressions made use of both in the *Nicene Creed*, and by *Athanasius* himself in some of his known and acknowledged writings. The *Nicene Creed* closes with pronouncing the anathema of the Catholick and Apostolick Church, upon such as should hold certain errors respecting the person of Christ; and among others, upon "such as should say

nature. For among other charges brought against him, he was accused of *ravishing a professed Virgin*—of sending *Plasannus*, a Bishop of his party, to fire the house of *Arsenius*, a Bishop of the *Meletian* party; and of tying him to a post, and whipping him, and then casting him into prison. And though he demurred at first to the competency of his Judges, and afterwards finding his demur was not admitted, denied the several charges; yet when he perceived that the Council were resolved to delegate some of their number, to inquire into the true state of the case, he thought it best to take his flight, to avoid confronting the evidence which he knew they could procure; and upon the authority of which, after the return of the Delegates from *Egypt*, they passed sentence against him.

* See particularly Bishop *Clayton's* Essay on Spirit, § 133, 141, 142, pp. 135 & seq. & 163 also numbers 11, 12 & 13.

34 *The Nicene and Athanasian Creeds* ART. VIII.

"that He was of another *Hypostasis* or *Ufia*;" plainly using these words as equivalent in their sense. And *Athanasius* in a treatise on the Synods of *Ariminum* and *Seleucia* positively asserts, that "the *Hypostasis* is the same with the *Ufia*, and "has no other signification †." But if we examine the language of the *Athanasian Creed*, we shall find the orthodox Faith described by "neither confounding the *Hypostases*, nor dividing the *Ufia*. For there is one *Hypostasis* of "the Father, another of the Son, and another "of the Holy Ghost †." And the damnatory clause declares this to be "that orthodox Faith, "which except a man keep undefiled, he cannot possibly be saved." Now this is also an additional objection against subscribing the Article. For since there is not an axiom in *Euclid*

* Nicene Creed.

Ἡ ἐξ ἑτέρων ὑποστάσεων. Ἡ ὁσίως ἀσκήσας
αἶμα — τῆς ἀναθεματί-
ζου καθολικῆς καὶ ἀποστολικῆς
ἐκκλησίας. Socrat. Eccles.
Hist. Lib. I. Cap. 5.

† Athanasian Creed.

Μὴτε συγχύοντες τὰς ὑ-
ποστάσεις, μὴτε τὴν ὁσίαν
ἀμερίζοντες. Ἀλλὰ τὴν ὁ-
σίαν τὴν πατρὸς. Ἀλλὰ τὴν
ἑαυτοῦ. Ἀλλὰ τὴν ἀγίου πνεύ-
ματος. Ἀὐτὴν αἰώνιον ἐκ
τοῦ πατρὸς, ὁμοούσιον, ὁμο-
γενετὸν, ἀμώμητον, ἀρρήτου
καὶ ἀφύκτου. Dissert. de tri-
bus Symbolis ad finem Usser-
rii Annal. Genevæ 1722.

† Ἡ δὲ ὁσίτης ὁσία ἐστὶ καὶ ἡ ἑαυτοῦ ἁλλὰ συμπληροῦνται
ἐκ τῶν Athanasii Opera, Tom. I. p. 934.

more self-evident than this, that two explanations of one doctrine, so directly contrary the one to the other, cannot both be true; no man can believe the Creed of the Council of Nice, and that which bears the name of *Athanasius*, to be both agreeable to the Scriptures. It would, in my judgment, be a very indecent reflection upon Revelation, to suppose that express contradictions can be proved by "most certain warrants of Scripture."

Thus taking the plain literal sense of the two Creeds and the Article, an ignorant and honest subscriber is brought into a very critical and dangerous situation. By the Nicene Creed he is sentenced to everlasting damnation, if he believes the doctrine of the Athanasian Creed—by the Athanasian Creed he is anathematized, if he believes the doctrine of the Nicene Creed—to render his damnation inevitable he is required by the Church of *England* to believe them *both*, upon pain of being devoted to the Devil, for his rejection of *either*—and by subscribing *ex animo* to the truth of the Article, he sets his own *Amen* to the complicated curse. So that let him believe what he will upon this point, it may truly be said, if he is saved at all, it must be so as by fire.

The origin of this remarkable contradiction in the phraseology of the two Creeds, is to be

26 *The Origin of the Contradictions.* ART. VIII.

sought in the disputes which first arose among the Consubstantialists, in the close of the fourth century, upon this question; Whether there were three *Hypostases* or but one *Hypostasis* in the Trinity?

Each opinion had its patrons; and each party was well disposed to anathematize the other. And though it has been said that the dispute was merely verbal, and that they were reconciled, as soon as they understood one another, this consideration will not remove the difficulty in the present case. I feel no reluctance in granting, that they did not understand one another; for it does not appear that they understood themselves. Ideas and words, especially in metaphysical controversies, do not always go together. They had fixed upon a phrase to be the Shibboleth of a party, but probably left it to others to find out the distinct idea it expressed. But thus much is certain; that the latter Creed was framed with a respect to a supposed difference—that it was designed to hold forth that difference—and cannot therefore be *thoroughly* received and believed, without becoming a partizan in that dispute, on the side of the Compilers. If a reconciliation between the Disputants afterwards took place, the Church should not have perpetuated the memorial of their verbal strife, and have kept up that difference and contradiction of expression, which the original parties

had

had dropped. Besides, the *literal* sense of *Hypostasis* and *Usia* as applied to the same subject, will always be the same.

Though the damnatory clause of the Nicene Creed is not continued in use, in the publick service of the Church; he has thought proper to retain that which is annexed to the Athanasian Creed, of which I must take some farther notice.

To prevent any groundless suspicions, I think it proper here to premise, that upon the authority of divine revelation, I most firmly believe the true and proper Deity of the Son and Spirit, as essentially partakers of the Divine nature. The doctrine of the Trinity, I receive as the doctrine of Scripture. It appears to me to be clearly taught in the Bible; but the mode of this incomprehensible union and relation, is no where that I can find, the subject of Divine revelation. And probably the limited extent of human comprehension in the present state, might be the reason why it is not revealed. But there is surely a wide difference between believing upon the authority of the word of God, that the Son and the Holy Ghost are together with the Father the one only living and true Jehovah; and crediting upon no other evidence, than the threatened penalty of damnation by a

mere fellow mortal, any human explanation of the mode of their distinct subsistence in the Godhead. As all our inquiries into the Divine Essence must necessarily be clogged with many difficulties, in attempting explications of this kind, the best of men have but darkened counsel by words without knowledge. One should imagine however that no man would scruple to grant, that an explanation ought to be intelligible. An unintelligible explication is a perfect solecism. But he that can understand the Athanasian explication, possesses a degree of sagacity which I despair of ever attaining, unless Mr. Rotherham could transfer to me his amazing powers of penetration*. But I should be extremely sorry to be convinced, that such an incapacity or weakness of intellect is a *damnable sin*. An anxious solicitude for my own salvation, naturally suggests the question, Who ever gave the Compiler of this Creed authority to say so? Yet according to him every man who does not perfectly believe in it, must without doubt perish everlastingly.

* See ROTHERHAM'S *Apology for the Athanasian Creed*, who has represented it as a perfect model of the most close, conclusive, and perspicuous reasoning. But the injudicious extravagance of this Gentleman's encomiums upon it, is very clearly demonstrated by the ingenious Author of an anonymous pamphlet, intitled, *An Answer to Dr. ROTHERHAM'S Apology for the Athanasian Creed; in a Letter to a Friend*. So much I think must be allowed by those, who do not approve the Author's own particular view of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Some

Some persons * would justify this uncharitable censure, as being no more than a plain paraphrase on the words of Scripture: delivered by One, whose authority I am no more inclined to dispute, than the warmest Advocates for this Creed. But it is astonishing that any intelligent writer, should not discern the manifest difference between our Blessed Lord's denouncing everlasting condemnation, upon those who believe not in him, notwithstanding the miraculous evidence he produced of his divine mission; and a similar sentence being passed upon such, as only disapprove a metaphysical explication of a sublime doctrine of Christianity, by a fallible Man, who neither did nor could produce any evidence of his divine inspiration. Others have endeavoured to abate the force of the dam-natory clause, by applying it to the doctrine in general, rather than to the particular explanation contained in the Creed. But the Compiler has taken sufficient pains to prevent such a construction. The introduction, connection, repetition, and phraseology of the clause, abundantly

* See SEED'S Sermons, Vol. III. Ser. 5. And also *A practical and explanatory Commentary on the Liturgy of the Church of England*, p. 215. written by my learned and honoured Friend HENRY WALDOE, Esq. a Book, which however exceptionable in some passages to a Dissenter, is nevertheless excellently adapted to promote a spirit of true practical devotion, in the Members of the Church of England.

confirm

confirm this assertion. The Compiler begins with saying, "Whosoever will be saved, before
 "all things it is necessary, that he hold the
 "Catholick Faith: Which Faith, except every
 "one do keep whole and undefiled, without
 "doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the
 "Catholick Faith is this." He then proceeds to a part of the explanation, delivered in terms superintelligible to many, and in some instances, I conceive equally inconsistent with itself, and with the language in common use and esteem among Athanasians. Then apparently apprehensive that the reader's Faith would fail before he got to the end, the Compiler quickens his belief, by a repetition of the Sentence of damnation in the body of the Creed; wherein he expresses himself in terms, which do immediately respect the preceding explanations. "He therefore that will be saved, must *thus* think of
 "the Trinity." And lest this should not be sufficient to suppress all doubts, the Creed closes with the same peremptory decision, and positive denunciation. "This is the Catholick Faith, which except a man believe faithfully he cannot be saved." Bishop *Burnet* acknowledges, that these clauses must be referred not merely to the doctrine of the Trinity, but to the explication given in the Creed*. And all which the learned Prelate offers by way of seeming apology, rather

* *Burnet's Exposition*; p. 133-4.

than

than in strict vindication of its severity, most evidently tends to establish, what at the same time he seems heartily to wish, he could have overthrown.

Bishop *Beveridge* styles the Athanasian, an *incomparable* Creed *; and I do most cordially subscribe to the truth of the assertion. For of all the monuments in human nature of presumption, arrogance, and conceit, which the history of past ages has left on record, I know of none which may be fitly compared to this. If I give a momentary credit to the justice of this dreadful sentence, what numerous infernal spectres present themselves to my imagination—the departed ghosts of illustrious men, of whom I have been wont to conceive as fallen asleep in Jesus, and joined to the spirits of the just, made perfect above! Shall I mention many distinguished Worthies in the Established Church? Or recall to the remembrance of Protestant Dissenters, the more familiar names of *Owen, Baxter, Howe, Ridgley, Watts, Doddridge, Jennings, &c.* some of whom wrote in defence of the doctrine of the Trinity, but upon different views from those given in this celebrated Creed; and the rest it is well known, highly disapproved it? But let me seek relief from this horrid imagination, in that memorable maxim of the Jewish Sage, “As the

* *Beveridge's Exposition*, p. 163.

92 *Of a qualified Subscription to this Clause. Art. viii.*

“bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying,
“so the curse causeless shall not come*.”

It may probably be objected by some, that whatever was the sense of the Compiler, they *subscribed* the damnatory clause, only so far as it is intended to declare a belief in the Trinity, and the importance of that Doctrine. But give me leave to suggest, that this is departing from the principle on which we set out. This is not to subscribe in the *plain, full, literal, grammatical* sense. This is not *thoroughly* to receive and believe it. Besides, it must be allowed that there is no inconsistency between the belief of the Trinity, and a disapprobation of this Creed, in which divine and eternal vengeance, is most prophanelly hurled upon the heads of all, who scruple assent to any of it's terms which they do not understand. Blessed be God! tho' bigoted zealots may thus wantonly sport with damnation, they are not the authorized ministers of the wrath of Heaven. For my own part, I never read this favourite symbol of the Church, without an equal mixture of contempt and indignation. I can never think of imposing subscription to it, as a *condition of toleration*, without both lamenting and detesting the fatal influence of ignorance and superstition.

* Prov. xvi. 2.

But

But I forget myself. Though it is a doctrine of the Church to which our subscription is required, that, Whosoever does not *thoroughly* receive the Athanasian Creed, must without doubt perish everlastingly; some of my Brethren have represented all the doctrines of the Articles, to which our subscription is required, as “the basis of their Hope, the source of their Comfort, and the most powerful incentive to a course of sincere stedfast chearful obedience *.” However such as can apply that encomium to this uncharitable doctrine, must pardon me for saying, I am astonished at their feelings; at the same time that I cannot forbear complimenting them upon the height of their attainments, in the art of extracting good out of evil. I chearfully acknowledge that the dignity of the person of the Saviour, is all this in my account. But the doctrine contained in the damnatory clause of the Athanasian Creed, never operated on my mind so as to be the parent of one hope, the source of one comfort, or the incentive to one duty. I most firmly believe, that “God so loved the World as to give his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth on him,” (though sentenced to everlasting damnation by a Creed of human invention,) “might not perish, but might have everlasting life †.” Yet if the

* See *An Apology for the Renewal of an Application, &c.*
P. 45.

† John iii. 16.

94. *This Definition of a lawful Calling* Art. xxiii.
intire approbation of this Creed, be *indeed* an indispen-
sable condition of salvation; the promise
must fail in it's accomplishment, and many
sincere disciples of our Blessed Lord, would be
constrained, though in the language of deep
despair, to adopt the words of *Constantine* to a
Novatian Bishop, " If so, then *Acefus* you must
" set up your ladder, and go to Heaven by
" yourself."

ARTICLE XXIII.

*IT is not lawful for any man to take upon him
the Office of publick preaching, or ministring the
Sacraments in the congregation, before he be law-
fully called, and sent to execute the same. And
those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent,
which be chosen and called to this work by men
who have PUBLICK authority given unto them in
the congregation, to call and send Ministers into
the Lord's vineyard.*

If I am not greatly mistaken, it will plainly
appear upon an impartial inquiry, that every
Protestant Dissenting Minister who subscribes
this Article, declares it to be the matter of his
belief, that it is not lawful for himself, nor for any
one of his Brethren, of whatever denomination, to
take upon him the office of publick preaching,
or ministring the Sacraments.

It is not sufficient to evade the force of this conclusion, for any Protestant Dissenter to say, that in his *own opinion*, he is lawfully called and sent. It is confessed, that we have all vanity enough to think that we are as lawfully called, and as fully authorized to take upon us the character of Christian Ministers, and of Christian Bishops, as his Grace of *York*, or *Canterbury*. But let us take heed how we draw the church into this concession, to which we have reason to believe, she has very material and insuperable objections. Will our calling agree with the Church's definition of a lawful calling? And it is to Her Judgment we are required to subscribe. For my own part, I am utterly at a loss to find out any plausible pretence for the supposition; since there are so many decisive evidences, that we are *not* in the judgment of the *Church* lawfully called and sent.

If we examine the language of the Toleration Act itself, which seems the best plea in favour of our being accounted duly authorized for the discharge of ministerial functions, it will confirm, in my opinion, the contrary supposition. Let us attend to the terms and expressions made use of as descriptive of our Character; and they will be found to be expressive of the different views, which we ourselves on the one part, and the Church of *England* and the State on the other,

other, entertain of our title to the ministerial Office. We are therein described as "persons" dissenting from the Church of England in "holy Orders," under which character we are supposed to apply for relief; but then it is added, "or *pretended holy Orders, or pretending to holy Orders* *", as the light in which the State and the Church consider us. In one section the former part of the description is dropped; and the latter only retained †. Now I cannot conceive that this language would have been adopted, if it had been the judgment of the Church, that we were *lawfully called and sent*; for it is never used in reference to any who have had episcopal ordination. And however favourable that Act may justly be thought in other respects, to a legal estimation of us under the character of Christian Ministers; it is worthy of observation, that an Act passed in the Reign of *William and Mary*, could not possibly operate on the *original literal* sense of an Article, composed in the reign of King *Edward the Sixth*, who lived so many years before. Strictly speaking, it could have no immediate respect to us, who at that time only existed in the loins of our Fore-fathers the Puritans; a very venerable, but at the same time a despised and persecuted set of men. It was not therefore likely to have

* *Will. and Mary, cap. 18. § 7.* † *§ 9.*

in a favourable aspect upon them; but seems to have had some prophetic kind of reference to the claims of their successors, which were hereby, when in embryo, declared to be unlawful. Nor is it by any means the *design* of the Toleration Act, to determine any thing in favour of the validity of our calling; but to protect our persons and property, and establish the exercise of our Worship upon certain conditions. Without allowing the validity of our claims to the ministerial character, it grants us, under those restrictions, the liberty of ministering to our deluded hearers, whose erroneous consciences lead them to differ and dissent from the Church.

As a farther evidence of the difference of opinion, between the Church and us on the point in question; it is proper to remark, that upon the apprehension of our having *no lawful authority* to preach or administer the Sacraments, in case a Dissenting Minister conforms to the established Church, it is an indispensable condition of his taking upon him a cure of Souls, that he be *re-ordained*; and that not merely as necessary to constitute him a Minister of the Church of *England*, but in order to make him a Minister *at all*. For this is not required of a Popish Priest under the like circumstances; Innumerable testimonies might be produced, to prove that the validity of dissenting ordination,

H

has

has ever been called in question by the writers of the Church. Dr. *Nichols* in one of his expostulations, thus interrogates the reader on this subject. "Is there just ground for their applying
 " to Presbyterian assemblies for holy orders,
 " when not only the most venerable antiquity,
 " but even St. *Jerom*, least inclinable of all the
 " Ancients to favour Bishops, confesses that this
 " is an Office strictly episcopal *?" In another part of his Defence of the Church of *England*, he delivers the judgment of that Church upon a congregational mission; in terms not a little remarkable upon several accounts. "Another
 " fault, says he, which *Arminians* are charged
 " with, is heartily detested by us, viz. Depressing
 " the venerable orders of the Ministry down to
 " the meanest of the people, and esteeming that
 " a sufficient mission, when the Congregation
 " chuse a man out of themselves, who hath a
 " good faculty at speaking, and is well read in
 " the Holy Scriptures, and appoint him for their
 " Pastor. This extravagant way of calling
 " Ministers we utterly condemn, as opening the
 " door to thieves and robbers, and tending to
 " the destruction of men's souls; because by
 " this means prophane men would intrude
 " themselves into the Church of Christ without
 " any lawful authority; and being destitute of
 " all good learning, and commonly armed with

* *Nichols's* Defence of the Church of England, p. 245.

“ monstrous assurance and presumption, they
“ would have opportunity to abuse their flocks,
“ and pass any frantick notion upon them for
“ the word of God: This we take to be an
“ innovation, repugnant not only to the autho-
“ rity of the New Testament, but likewise to
“ the precepts of the Old *.”

There is so much of High Church prejudice, ignorance, misrepresentation, and slander in this flaming paragraph, that every intelligent reader will easily discern how little regard it deserves; and therefore I shall spare myself the trouble of making any remarks upon it. I only quote it in evidence of the judgment of the Church:

Dr. *Wells* published some curious Theses against the validity of Presbyterian ordination, and told Mr. *Pierce*, that “ this was the chief point of
“ controversy between the Church of *England*
“ and the Dissenters †.” In the same controversy he attempted to convince us, “ That our
“ Ministers have not a true mission, or, (which
“ is the same,) that (which is now a-days called)
“ a Presbyterian Ordination, is not valid or
“ sufficient to authorize the person so ordained,
“ to teach or to perform any other part of the
“ Ministerial Office ‡.” He also says, “ That

* *Nichols* ubi supra, p. 218.

† *Wells's* Controversial Treatises, p. 306. Lond. 1716.

‡ See *Pierce's* Remarks on *Wells's* Letters, p. 26. Lond
1711.

“ the doctrine of the Church of *England*, concerning the power of Ordination, belonging “ (not to a community of Presbyters, but) to “ single persons, by us called Bishops, is agree- “ able to the direction and practice of the great “ Apostle *St. Paul*, and consequently of Aposto- “ lical constitution *.” In consequence of this persuasion, his conscience was so exceedingly scrupulous, that it would not suffer him, though in a quotation, “ to say the *Lancashire Ministers*, “ or *London Ministers*, but instead of Ministers, “ he took the liberty to put in *Teachers* †;” lest he should seem to acknowledge the validity of their Ordination.

Upon the same principle Mr. *White* represents the Dissenting Laity, as leaving the communion of their lawful Bishops and Priests, duly ordained to their Office; to put themselves under the guidance and administrations of others, *not duly ordained* to it. Hence he takes occasion to call in question, even the *efficacy of the Ordinances* administered by Dissenting Teachers ‡.

Now it is not to be imagined, that the Champions of the Church of *England* would talk in this style, if the Article under consideration had allowed us to be *lawfully called and sent*. Nor is

* *Pierce ubi supra*, p. 38.

† *Pierce ubi supra*, p. 43.

‡ *White's Letters*. Let. I. p. 85. Edit. 4.

it easy to be conceived, that so judicious and acute a disputant as the learned Mr. *Pierce*, should not then have pressed this article upon his adversary, to have shewn the inconsistency of Dr. *Wells's* censures, with the publick standard of the faith of the Church of *England*. But to the best of my recollection, neither he, nor our unanswerable advocate Mr. *Towgood*, ever thought of suggesting such an argument in favour of dissenting Ordination.

Again, some Clergymen abiding by the terms of the Article, and the doctrine of the Church respecting ordination; and also apprehending that the validity of all sacramental administrations, depends upon the validity of the ordination of the Administrator; have refused, what the Church calls, Christian Burial to persons baptized by Dissenting Ministers. The reason alleged for the refusal has always been this—That the Baptism whether of Infants or Adults by such persons, was no Baptism at all, because they had not a competent authority to administer it; and consequently, as in the judgment of the Church the Baptism of Water makes a man a Christian, and is essential to his being such, Christian burial must be refused in those cases. I could produce several instances to prove, that this has been the conduct of some Clergymen, and these the principles upon which

they have vindicated their conduct. But I shall only select one instance in support of my assertion *.

However

* Upon occasion of the death of an Infant, which happened *October* 26, 1730, in the Parish of C——, in the County of S——; the Uncle of the deceased sent his Servant to the Vicar, to give him notice of the intended burial of the Child on the 28th instant. The Vicar asked some questions about the Baptism of the Child; and said he would not bury it, if it was baptized by Mr. M——, then Dissenting Minister at K——. When the Servant returned, and made this report to his Master, he was sent back again to inform the Vicar, that the Child was baptized by Mr. M——, and that Esq; V—— was present at the Baptism. The Corpse was carried to the Church-yard at the time appointed; but though the Vicar buried another Corpse that afternoon, and was earnestly intreated to bury this, particularly on account of the Mother's anxiety, who was a Church Woman, and almost distracted with the thought of "her Child being buried like a Dog;" yet he absolutely refused it, saying, it was not baptized by a *lawful Minister*, and therefore had no right to be buried by one that was; and that he was accountable to none but the Bishop. The Uncle of the Child next made his application to a neighbouring Clergyman, who was in the place on a visit, but he made the same objection. He then went to the Rector of S——, who said that Mr. B—— was in the wrong, but as Mr. B—— was at home, he durst not come and bury the Child. He advised however that the Corpse should be put in the ground, which was accordingly done. The Vicar afterwards consulted the Bishop, and upon his return gave a written promissory engagement, not to offend in like manner again. I have before me an attested copy of the original paper, signed with the Vicar's own hand.

" Whereas

However it must be acknowledged, that there was as much *ignorance* as *bigotry* in all those instances, which have respected the interment of *Children*; for the constitution of the Church of *England* does not warrant a refusal in those cases. The administration of the ordinance of Baptism has been adjudged to be valid, by several publick Acts and Canons of the Church, although the Administrator is not in holy orders, or lawfully called and sent to the work of the Ministry. So early as the time of *Ecgbriht*, who

“Whereas I did lately refuse to administer Christian Burial to D——, Son of D—— C——, of C——, in the County of S——, I do hereby declare, that upon consultation had with the Bishop of this Diocese, who did allow the Baptism of a Child by a Dissenting Minister to be valid; and considering that the general practice in this matter is against me, that I will for the future, conform to his Lordship's judgment and determination in this case, by using the aforesaid office to all persons, although so baptized.”——Signed

J—— B——, Vicar of C——.

Dated Nov. 13, 1730.

Mr. M——, the Dissenting Minister who had baptized the Child, was satisfied with this acknowledgment; but the Uncle of the Child, in order to pacify the Mother, insisted that besides this acknowledgment, Mr. B—— should read the form over the Corpse in the Grave; and accordingly on the 18th of *November* following, the Grave was opened, and the Vicar complied with the requisition, to his no small mortification, as some Women present upon the occasion, rallied him pretty freely. It is remarkable that the Living was given to Mr. B—— by a Dissenter.

was consecrated to the See of York, A. D. 734, it appears from his ecclesiastical Institutions (Answer to Quest. 5.) that it was then the opinion of the Church, that Baptism, though performed by a person *unordained*, who had *usurped the priesthood*, ought not to be repeated; though other ministrations performed by an unworthy man were not thought valid. It was also granted by one of the Canons (Can. 3.) of *Hubert Walter* at *Westminster*, A. D. 1200, which was published to ascertain and preserve all the prerogatives of the sacerdotal function; that a Layman might nevertheless baptize a Child in case of necessity. And it was determined that even a Father or Mother might do it, *without impeachment of Matrimony*. — This decision was intended to abolish some older Canons, which dissolved Matrimony on account of the Father's or Mother's baptizing one of their children. For it was pretended, says *Johnson*, “ that by the Father's baptizing the Child a spiritual relation was contracted, which made any future conjunction with his own Wife *incestuous*.” In the time of necessity, says another Popish Author, the “ Minister of Baptism is every Man, both *male* and *female*. A Woman, be she young or old, sacred or wicked. Every Male, that hath his wits, and is neither dumb, nor so drunken, but that he can utter the words; as well *Pagan*, *Infidel*, and *Heretick*, the bad

“as the good; the *Schismatick*, as the *Catholic*,
 “may baptize *.” It is well known that
 Baptism administered by Midwives, was both
 allowed and practised in the Church of *Rome*, and
 in the Church of *England*. As the profession of
 Midwifry was (by an odd connection of ideas)
 accounted a *spiritual* employment, the giving
 a licence for it formerly belonged to the Arch-
 bishop of *Canterbury*. And Mr. *Steyne* has ex-
 tracted from Archbishop *Parker*’s Register, the
 Oath which was taken by one *Eleanor Peash*
 when admitted to this profession. After several
 engagements not to lay supposititious children to
 the Mothers, in the place of the true natural
 ones, not to use forceries, enchantments, &c.
 and not to hurt or dismember the Child, the
 following words are inserted. “Also that in
 “the ministration of the Sacrament of Baptism,
 “in the time of necessity, I will use apt and the
 “accustomed words of the same Sacrament, that
 “is to say, these words following, or the like in
 “effect. *I Christen thee in the name of the Father,*
 “*the Son, and the Holy Ghost:* and none other
 “prophane words. And that in such time of
 “necessity, in baptizing any Infant born, and
 “pouring water upon the head of the same
 “Infant, I will use pure and clean water, and
 “not any Rose or Damask water, or water made

* *Javel Phil. Ch. Par. 5. p. 559.*

“ of

“ of any confection or mixture *.” The administration of Baptism was not limited to Persons in holy Orders, ’till after the Conference at *Hampton Court*.

(The distinction between the validity of Ordination, and the validity of Baptism, as the avowed doctrine of the Church of *England*, is yet farther apparent from the proceedings of the Convocation in the Year 1712; when the Bishops sent down the following paper to the Lower House, in consequence of the disputes which then prevailed upon this point.

“ Forasmuch as sundry persons have of late
 “ by preaching, writing, and discourses, possessed
 “ the minds of many people in the communion
 “ of our Church, with doubts and scruples about
 “ the validity of their Baptism, to their great
 “ trouble and disquiet: We the President,
 “ Bishops, &c. have thought it incumbent on us
 “ to declare, in conformity with the judgment
 “ and practice of the Catholick Church of
 “ Christ, and of the Church of *England* in particular,
 “ That such persons as have been already
 “ baptized in or with water, in the name of the
 “ Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, though their
 “ Baptism was *irregular* for want of a *proper*
 “ *Administrator*, ought not to be baptized again,

Strype's Annals, Vol. I. p. 501, 2d Edit. 1707.

“ This

" This we do to prevent, and (to use the words
" of Archbishop *Whitgift* on this very point;)
" not to bring confusion into the Church; for
" let men take heed, that they *usurp not an*
" *office whereunto they be not called*; for God will
" call them to an account for so doing: but to
" teach a truth, to take a yoke of doubtfulness
" from men's consciences, and to resist an error
" not much differing from Donatism and Ana-
" baptism."

Hence it is apparent, that their Lordships
considered the application of water, and the use
of the words of the Institution, as the only essen-
tials to the validity of the administration of
Baptism. But it is equally evident that they did
not allow the validity of Dissenting ordination,
nor give it as the judgment of the Church, that
other persons besides those episcopally ordained,
were lawfully called and sent to take upon them
the office of ministering the Sacraments in the
Congregation. If they had granted this, it would
have effectually removed the grounds of the
scruples; and if they had thought the twenty-
third Article of the Church of *England* would
have warranted such a concession, they would no
doubt have urged it on that particular occasion.

The above Declaration " was agreed to in the
" Upper House, the Bishop of *Rocheſter* only
" dissent-

“dissenting. But when it was sent to the Lower
 “House, they would not so much as take it into
 “consideration, but laid it aside, thinking that
 “it would encourage those, who struck at the
 “*Dignity of the Priesthood* *.” This objection
 came from the Popish spawn of Archbishop
Laud; which is the more remarkable, when we
 reflect that the validity of Lay Baptism was
 originally an High Church principle, grounded
 upon the opinion of the indispensable necessity
 of the baptism of water, to the salvation of the
 soul. But when this provision for the salvation
 of Infants, was likely to encroach upon the
 priestly Prerogatives, the Clergy of this stamp
 thought it most advisable to secure the credit
 of the latter, though it should be at the expence
 of the former. How much to the honour of
 their benevolence and charity, I leave to others
 to determine.

About the same time, to prevent the spread of
 Mr. *Dodwell's* principles, several of the dignified
 Clergy, and particularly Bishop *Burnet*, and
 Bishop *Talbot*, laboured by other means to re-
 move all doubts about the validity of Baptism,
 administered by persons not episcopally ordained.
 The former in a Sermon preached at *Salisbury*;
 and the latter in a charge to the Clergy of the

* *Burnet's History of his own Times*, Vol. II. p. 605.
 Edit. 1734.

diocese of Oxford, which does great honour to the moderation and candour of the Bishop. The general principles upon which they both proceed, are the same with those urged in the declaration of the upper House of Convocation. Bishop Burnet seemed very solicitous, to prevent the conceit of Mr. Dodwell from gaining credit in the Church. For as he elsewhere says, "the Dispute was not a trifling one, since by this Notion, the Teachers among the Dissenters passing for Laymen, this went to the rebaptizing them and their Congregations *." Bishop Talbot suggested upon this occasion an additional consideration, which was likely to operate with great weight upon the minds of the High Church party, who favoured the spreading notion of the invalidity of Baptism, administered by persons not episcopally ordained. He reminded his Clergy, that the Children of King James the first, were baptized by Ministers who had only had Presbyterian orders in Scotland, and were never ordered to be rebaptized. Hence it would easily be inferred, that according to the notion then adopted, the Blessed Martyr would at last turn out to be no Christian. This was both *Argumentum ad rem* & *Argumentum ad homines*. There were some other arguments which his Lordship drew from certain irregularities, which took place in times of publick confusion, which

* Burnet ubi supra, p. 604.

he thought equally conclusive; and he strongly urges the uncharitableness of the doctrine he opposed.

The preceding testimonies appear sufficient to me to prove, that no argument can be drawn from the general acknowledgment of the validity of Baptism, administered by Dissenting Ministers, which will conclude any thing in favour of this Article's allowing the validity of Dissenting Ordination.

Nor is it foreign to my purpose on the subject of this Article to observe, that among the several dangerous positions charged upon an illustrious Prelate, this appears to be one. That his Lordship's opinion was, that a man might lawfully, or according to God's appointment, be called to the Ministry, though his commission be not derived to him through an uninterrupted succession in the episcopal order. This is a plain demonstration what was the judgment of the Convocation Committee*.

Let us now proceed to examine the sentiments of several Commentators upon this Article.

Rogers ranks among the adversaries to the truth of this article, all who run before they be

* See *Stebbing's Defence* of the first Head of the Report of the Committee, p. 1. § 3. ch. 2. in his *Polemical Tracts*, Edit. Camb. 1727.

sent; and among these he reckons the *Anabaptists*, or *Anabaptistical Swarmers*, *Family-Elders*, and law-despising *Brownists*. These, he says, “ are
“ sent of Men not authorized thereunto by the
“ word of God, and that to the disturbance of
“ the peace of the Church *.”

Bishop *Beveridge* after speaking of the succession from the Apostles, says, “ So that none
“ are now lawful Ministers but such as are
“ called by him, (i. e. Christ) and all that are
“ thus called by him are lawful Ministers; I
“ mean all such as are called by such as succeed
“ them in the Ministry, who were called immediately from Christ himself. For these are
“ they which certainly we are to understand by
“ those mentioned in this article, *Who have*
“ *publick authority given unto them in the Congregation or Church to call and send Ministers into*
“ *the Lord's vineyard.* But of this we shall
“ speak more by the blessing of God, in the
“ 36th Article, where we shall treat of the consecration of Bishops and Ministers †.” I am heartily sorry his Lordship's exposition upon that Article is not extant; but the Bookseller, it seems, was defrauded of the manuscript which contained the exposition of the last nine articles. However from the nature of the reference, we

* *Rogers* ubi supra, p. 141, 2, 3.

† *Beveridge* ubi supra, p. 272.

may easily guess the general purport of its application, to the point in question.

Bishop *Burnet* gives us the judgment of the Church, on the subject of this lawful authority mentioned in the Article, in the following words.

“ That which we believe to be *lawful Authority*, is that Rule which the body of the
 “ Pastors, or Bishops and Clergy of a Church
 “ shall settle, being met in a body under the
 “ due respect to the powers that God shall set
 “ over them: Rules thus made, being in no-
 “ thing contrary to the word of God, and duly
 “ executed by the particular persons to whom
 “ that care belongs, are certainly the *lawful*
 “ *Authority*. Those are the Pastors of the
 “ Church, to whom the care and watching over
 “ the Souls of the People is committed; and
 “ the Prince, or Supreme Power, comprehends
 “ virtually the whole body of the people in
 “ him: Since according to the constitution of
 “ the civil Government, the wills of the people
 “ are understood to be concluded by the
 “ Supreme, and such as are the subject of the
 “ *Legislative Authority* *.”

Since we are bound to subscribe to the judgment of the Church of *England*, this is the idea

we ought to entertain of lawful authority, in declaring our unfeigned assent to the truth of this Article.

But his Lordship was well aware of the aspect this definition had upon the foreign Protestant Churches. And as he was both too wise and too good a man, to unchurch all those Congregations which were not modelled upon the plan of diocesan episcopacy, he sought for some healing expedient, to preserve the foreign Protestant Churches from falling victims to the preceding definition. He has therefore recourse to such a latitude of interpretation, as would bring them within the bounds of a lawful Authority.

“ If, says he, a company of Christians find
 “ the publick Worship where they live to be
 “ so defiled that they cannot with a good con-
 “ science join in it, and if they do not know of
 “ any place to which they can conveniently go,
 “ where they may worship God purely, and in
 “ a regular way; if, I say, such a body finding
 “ some that have been ordained, though to the
 “ lower functions, should submit itself entirely
 “ to their conduct, or finding none of those,
 “ should by a common consent, desire some of
 “ their own number to minister to them in holy
 “ things, and should upon that beginning grow
 “ up to a *regulated constitution*, though we are
 I “ very

“ very sure that this is *quite out of all rule*, and
 “ could not be done without a very great sin,
 “ unless the necessity were great and apparent ;
 “ yet if the necessity is real and not feigned,
 “ this is not condemned or annulled by the
 “ article.” Because he thinks, “ when this
 “ grows to a *constitution*, and when it was begun
 “ by the consent of a body, who were supposed
 “ to have an authority in such an extraordinary
 “ case,” it is consistent with the judgment of
 the Compilers, and of their successors *.

Thus the Right Reverend Author provided for the estimation of foreign Churches so constituted, as true Churches with respect to all *essentials* ; though he accounts them to have been “ irregularly formed at first, and still to be continued in an imperfect state.” Whether this concession is sound doctrine, considered as the language of an English Prelate ; or how far it is conformable to the opinions and censures of other writers of the Church of *England*, I shall not here inquire. But I have strong suspicions of the contrary.

Here however the good Bishop himself was aground. His latitudinarian principles could not extend the idea of lawful authority so far, as to comprehend the English Dissenting Ministers within the number of those, who are called

* *Burnet ubi supra*, p. 320, 321.

by a lawful authority ; or our Congregations within the pale of the true Church. The very principles upon which he proceeds for the vindication of the foreign Protestants, are calculated for the annihilation of all our claims. For we cannot suppose, that the Church will allow her publick worship to be defiled at all, while she claims the character of a truly Apostolick Church ; much less to be so defiled, that we cannot with a good conscience join in it, or worship God in a regular way in her communion. She cannot therefore admit that *real, apparent,* and *great necessity* for desiring some of our own number to minister to us in holy things, without which, it would not only in his Lordship's judgment be very *irregular*, but also a *very great sin* to seek any other, than the established Teachers and Pastors.

Ford in his comment upon this Article, contends for what I conceive to be the true interpretation of it, by producing numerous quotations ; in one of which this is the account given of a lawful calling to the Ministry, in a kind of paraphrase upon 2 Cor. v. 20. " Moreover, since God

" from the time he called the Apostles, calleth

" no man *immediately* to the Ministry ; it re-

" mains that they who are called to the Mi-

" nistry, should be called by those, to whom it

" belongs to call others. So the Apostles have

“ ordained Presbyters and Bishops; and those
 “ ordained by the Apostles have afterwards
 “ ordained others *.” He also alleges several
 testimonies from the Fathers, and closes his
 proof with the passage from Dr. *Nichols*, which
 I have before quoted †.

Welchman in his exposition of the Articles,
 inserts the same paraphrase on 2 Cor. v. 20.
 which I have mentioned above. And he thus
 expounds the clause concerning the persons to
 whom publick authority is given, to call and
 send Ministers into the Lord's vineyard. “ We
 “ know that this power from the age of the
 “ Apostles to the time of our Ancestors, was
 “ granted to Bishops alone. But since then
 “ certain Churches (in other respects rightly
 “ reformed) will have it that this power should
 “ also be granted to Presbyters; whether right
 “ or wrong let them see to that. We neither
 “ judge nor condemn them. But the case is far
 “ different as to our own Sectaries, who rebel-
 “ ling against the best constituted Church, have
 “ arrogated this episcopal authority to them-
 “ selves. Therefore we justly and deservedly
 “ account these guilty of schism and disorder ‡.”

In

* Vide *Ford* ubi supra, p. 210.

† See page 98.

‡ Potestatem hanc ab Apostolorum ævo usque ad Avorum
 nostrorum tempora Episcopis solis concessam novimus :
 Exinde

In support of this opinion, as the judgment of the Church of *England* upon this Article, he produces the authorities of *Bilson, Hall, Hooker, Lloyd, Burscough, Scott, and Field*, in their different treatises upon the nature and government of a Church.

From the consideration of what has been advanced upon this Article by the expositors above referred to, I cannot think it is capable of any fair interpretation in favour of Protestant Dissenters; nor that the liberal explication of it given by *Mr. Archdeacon B——*, will justly admit of an application to us.

“ The plain, says he, and if you will, the
 “ *grammatical* meaning of which words (i. e. the
 “ words of the Article) is, that there is a publick
 “ authority in every Christian Church, to ap-
 “ point the particular persons who are to mi-
 “ nister in *that* Church, exclusive of all others;
 “ and that they, and they only, who are so
 “ appointed, are lawfully called and sent. §.”

Exinde autem quædam Ecclesiæ (cætera etiam ritè reformatæ) Presbyteris quoque concessam volunt; rectène an secus ipsæ viderint. Nos eas nequè judicamus, neque spernimus. Nostratum vero, qui in Ecclesiam optime constitutam rebelles, Episcopalem hanc potestatem sibi arrogarunt, longe dispar est ratio. Proinde Hos Schismatis atque *etrazia* reos jure ac merito habemus. *Welchman* in Articulos. Edit. 4. Oxon. 1724. p. 25, 6.

§ Confessional, p. 132.

This explication, the learned Author of the Confessional gives us in opposition to the assertion of Dr. *Nichols*; who says, "There can be no doubt made, but that by *publick authority* the Compilers meant the authority of Bishops." I think Dr. *Nichols* is right. But if Mr. Archdeacon B——'s interpretation be just in itself, it still bears hard upon us. For the misfortune is, that however fairly it may be applied to vindicate foreign *Establisments*, it cannot be justly extended to the case of a *Separation* from any, which is founded upon an opposition to the publick authority of the Church. And the separate assemblies of Puritans and Nonconformists were never honoured so far, as to be considered as constituting any true Christian Church. It is very irrational to suppose, that what in the judgment both of the Law, and of the Church of *England* were deemed *illicit conventicles*, for so many years after the Articles were compiled; should yet be allowed by one of those Articles, to possess a *lawful authority* for calling and sending Ministers into the Lord's vineyard.

Dr. *Nowell* to serve a favourite point, grasped at this shadow of an argument for a proof, that persons of very different persuasions might very conscientiously subscribe the Articles; and has recourse to the old trimming expedient, of asserting that the Compilers only meant to avoid diver-

diversity of opinions, about opinions expressed and decided in the Articles. This Article, in his account, decides nothing on the point who were lawfully called; though one half of the Article consists, in describing who they are that can give a man a lawful calling*. Indeed the Heads of Houses are greatly indebted to certain Writers, for having helped them to something to say in defence of themselves, for persecuting those who held the doctrines of the Articles in the literal sense. But like some others, they chose to enjoy and exercise that latitude as their own exclusive privilege, while it proved no shelter to the unhappy young men from the rage and resentment of their tyrannical judges. As Dr. *Nowell* has no better proof than the rest of his latitudinarian Brethren, I dismiss all farther consideration of him, for the reasons assigned in the Introduction to this Review.

I conclude then, that by *publick authority* the Article intends the authority of the State; or in other words, an authority communicated from the King or Queen as Head of the Church, and supreme over all persons, in all causes as well ecclesiastical as temporal. This authority is communicated to Diocesan Bishops, and to them alone, as their exclusive right and prerogative.

* See *Nowell's Answer to Pietas Oxoniensis*, p. 95.

The Kings of *England* at the Reformation, assumed to themselves that ecclesiastical jurisdiction, which the Pope of *Rome* had before exercised over these Kingdoms. The Archbishop, Bishops, &c. have *no manner* of jurisdiction ecclesiastical but by and under the King's Majesty *. Their original commissions for the exercise of their spiritual jurisdiction, were issued from the Crown during the King's pleasure only. And among other peculiar prerogatives of the episcopal office, the power of Ordination itself was delegated from the King, and the Bishops were considered only as his *representatives* and *substitutes* in ordaining candidates for the Ministry †. That this power is delegated to them alone needs no proof. It is well known, that no man can officiate as a Reader in the Church, till he has received Deacon's orders from the Bishop. And a second ordination is requisite to qualify him for the full discharge of the ministerial office. This is called taking Priest's orders ‡. The Bishop, who,

* 26 Hen. VIII. cap. 1. 37 Hen. VIII. cap. 17. 1 Eliz. cap. 1.

† See Examination of the *Codex Juris*, &c. p. 32, 33.

‡ There seems to be a great impropriety in the application of the term *Priests*, to any Ministers under the Christian dispensation. For this character had always a special reference to the slaying and offering up of Sacrifices, which was the proper and distinguishing business of the Priests under

who, as it appears from the Ordination service, has the Holy Ghost at his disposal, then communicates him by the imposition of hands to the Candidate; and along with this mysterious communication, he transfers the additional power of absolving from sin. Previously therefore to this communication, a Clergyman must not presume to read the Absolution in the common prayer, or in the office for the visitation of the sick. Would to God he never presumed to do it afterwards, unless the forms were qualified by

under the Law. The Office they sustained, and the Sacrifices they presented, were merely typical of the priestly Office and expiatory Sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Since therefore He has now actually once offered up himself without spot to God, as the great Antitype of all the Jewish Sacrifices, and still sustains the character in Heaven, of the great High Priest of our profession; there remaineth no farther occasion for any other Sacrifices, and the office of Priests among Men, is no longer to be considered as a divine Institution. The New Testament never speaks of Ministers under this character, as distinguished from other Christians; and it is derogatory to the honour of our Lord for any to assume it. When indeed the consecrated Wafer came to be considered as a real Sacrifice, by being transubstantiated into the real Body and Blood of Christ, the deluded Consecrator might with some plausibility fancy himself a Priest. But since the doctrine of the Sacrifice of the Mass, and of a real Sacrifice in the Eucharist, are both now generally rejected by Protestants; we may well be content to resign the sacerdotal character to others, neither any longer calling our Ministers, *Priests*; nor our Communion-Tables, *Altars*. May God in infinite mercy hasten the deliverance of every Protestant Church, from the reproach of all such Relicks of Popish Idolatry and Superstition.

expressions

expressions more agreeable to the doctrines of Christianity, and the principles of Protestantism!

Thus alone in the judgment of the Church is a man lawfully called, and sent forth to minister in the Lord's vineyard.

A Diocesan Bishop only, by virtue of his episcopal authority, can truly make a man a Minister of Christ, and invest him with sacerdotal powers. Presbyters are not allowed any such authority. Much less is any such power allowed to exist in congregations, as that of calling, electing, and ordaining from among themselves, such as shall appear qualified by the gifts and graces of the Spirit, and competent measures of human literature, for the work of the Ministry, to the exercise of the pastoral office. To silence all objections to this exclusive claim, we read in the Canons of the Church, that "Whosoever shall affirm or teach, "that they who are made Priests, or Deacons "in this form, are not lawfully made, nor "ought to be accounted either by themselves "or others, to be truly either Priests, or Deacons, "until they have some *other* calling to those "Divine offices, is to be excommunicated *ipso facto* *." Yet how conceivable is it, that a man may pass through all these forms, and still

* Canon VIII. 1603.

be utterly destitute of the more important call and qualification, requisite to the Divine acceptance in the solemn and important character of a Christian Minister?

But are none besides these lawfully called to be Ministers of Christ? Is this doctrine agreeable to the sacred oracles? Does it correspond with the opinion of the Presbyterian assembly of Divines*? Is this consonant to the Savoy confession†? Or is it held by modern Dissenters of any denomination? Surely not. Is not all spiritual authority derived from Christ, the one only spiritual Head of the Church? Have Prelates or Presbyters any power of conveying gifts or graces, to qualify others for the work of the

* Ordination is the act of a Presbytery. Assembly's form of Church Government. Edinb. Edit. 1756, p. 534, & seq.

† A particular Church gathered and compleated according to the mind of Christ, consists of officers and members: The Lord Christ having given to such as he has called, who are united according to his appointment, in Church order, liberty and power to choose persons fitted by the Holy Ghost for that purpose, to be over them, and to minister to them in the Lord.

The way appointed by Christ for the calling of any person, fitted and gifted by the Holy Ghost, to the office of Pastor, Teacher or Elder in a Church, is, that he be chose thereto by the common suffrage of the Church itself, and solemnly set apart by fasting and prayer, with imposition of hands of the Eldership of that Church, if there be any before constituted therein. Savoy Declaration. Edit. 1729, p. 85. § 7. p. 87. § 11.

Ministry?

Ministry ? Nor do those of us who are of the congregational persuasion, apprehend that we derive any ministerial authority whatever, from our brethren who engage in the work of separating us to the Pastoral office, in our respective congregations. We rather consider that solemn service, as the publick ratification of the act of the Church, which has elected, and thereby ordained us to the pastoral oversight of them in the Lord. In consequence of this, our brethren unite in solemnly devoting and recommending us to the blessing of Almighty God, and no farther invest us with our office, than as ministerially declaring, owning, and approving the Church's prior election.

It is therefore to me a difficulty which I cannot solve, how any persons conscious that they themselves, are not in the judgment of the Church called to the Ministry by a lawful authority ; or that those who are peculiarly tender of the claims of the *most irregular*, to the title and estimation of Ministers of Christ, lawfully called to that sacred work ; should at the same time be zealous for subscription to an Article, which annihilates all those claims. I am far from denying the validity of the mission of any, who are duly qualified for the sacred office, and have been called to it by the Churches to which they belonged ; but upon this principle, must necessarily

rily disapprove this Article of the Church. And indeed I think it a hard and grievous condition of Toleration, in the exercise of the Christian Ministry, that I must first subscribe my assent and consent to the Church's declaration, that neither myself, nor any of my Brethren are lawfully called and sent thereunto.

To sum up all. It appears to me, to be but a sandy basis for the hope of acceptance from the Supreme Pastor, to recollect that we have usurped a claim to the character of his Under Shepherds, to which we had no right—but a miserable source of comfort, to reflect that in all our ministerial services, we have no lawful authority for what we do—and but a very weak incentive to a course of sincere, steadfast, chearful obedience to the commands given by Christ to his Ministers, to believe that they have not the most distant respect to us. Yet such I am fully persuaded from the authorities above produced, is the doctrine of this Article of the Church of *England*, with respect to Protestant Dissenting Ministers.

In the process of our examination of the established standard of doctrines, a disbelief of which is not to be even tolerated; I find another Article which deserves a very serious consideration by Protestant Dissenters.

ARTICLE XXXIII.

THAT person which by open denunciation of the Church is rightly cut off from the unity of the Church, and excommunicated, ought to be taken, of the whole multitude of the Faithful, as an Heathen and Publican, until he be openly reconciled by Penance, and received into the Church by a judge that hath authority thereunto.

The right of a Christian Church to excommunicate all scandalous and disorderly Members I readily grant, and the wise and judicious exercise of this right, conduces not a little, in my opinion, to the honour of our religion, and the well-being of our Churches. Would to God that the primitive discipline was more generally maintained among us all. But yet methinks there are many weighty objections to this Article, if we thoroughly examine the doctrines it contains. In order to a more accurate and comprehensive view of the subject, it will be proper to have recourse to some of the ancient Canons and Constitutions of the Church of *England*, made in the darkest days of ignorance and superstition. Perhaps some persons may apprehend, that these were utterly abolished at the time of the Reformation; but this is so far from being the truth, that many of them yet abide in full force, and

and have had their authority confirmed, under certain restrictions, by the expresse provision of a Statute in the reign of *Henry* the eighth.

“ Provided always that such Canons, Constitutions, Ordinances, and Synodals Provincial being already made, which be not contrariant, nor repugnant to the Laws, Statutes, and Customs of this Realm, nor to the damage or hurt of the King's Prerogative Royal, shall now still be used, and executed, as they were afore the making of this Act*.” Hence it appears, that as many as have not either in whole, or in part, been annulled by this, or by any Acts of Parliament of subsequent date, remain to this day in their full original authority. And indeed no Canons made since this Act, have so direct and expresse a ratification given them by Statute, as those which were made and executed before that time.

I shall begin with observing as to the *nature* of Excommunication, that it is distinguished into two kinds, the *Greater* and the *Less*. By the former a man is denounced accursed, devoted to the Devil, separated from Christ, and his Church's communion†. The latter only disqua-

* 25 *Hen. VIII.* cap. 19.

† The light in which this Sentence is to be understood, may be learnt from several references to it in the Canons
and

disqualifies him from receiving the Sacraments. The Article now under consideration relates to the

and Injunctions of the Church; but from none more fully, than from the following Instructions given to the Clergy, in what manner they should explain it to the people.

Populum docefaciant, Excommunicationis fulmine perfrictam personam ex Ecclesiâ quasi cadaver ejici debere, nec Cœnæ domini participem, nec divinarum officiorum, nec Christianæ societatis, sed à sinu communis Christianorum matris ecclesiæ revulsam, & abruptam à corpore Christi, cælo simul & terrâ esse exturbatam, diabolo & ejus consceleratis ministris mancipatam, & sempiternis flammarum cruciatibus addictam. Vide Reformatio Legum, Edit. Lond. 1640, p. 163.

And when this sentence is solemnly denounced by the Bishop himself, he is to be accompanied with twelve Priests that have burning Tapers in their hands; who when the dreadful sentence is denounced, extinguish their lights, and tread them under their feet.

Besides the dreadful effect which the sentence of Excommunication has upon the Soul, and the several Civil disabilities to which it exposes us in this life; if we may credit the testimony of some of the Canonists, it has also a miraculous effect upon the *bodies* of such as die under it's power. For we are told not only how much this sentence was ever dreaded by our Ancestors, and how much it is now feared in the Greek Church; but are also referred to an opinion held by the latter, that the body of an excommunicated person cannot return to Dust and Ashes, till the censure be released. Of which, says my Author, there is a strange relation in *Mart. Crusius Hist. Polit. Turcogræciæ*. And another parallel Story to this, related by Sir Paul Ricaut in his *State of the Greek Church*. This fabulous scarecrow is hung out by a grave Doctor, to terrify the Fanatick and Non-conforming Party, and warn them of their danger, in making light of the censures of the Canon Law.

It

the former. When the lesser Excommunication is intended, it is always particularly specified. But the Canonists are agreed, that when the sentence of Excommunication is spoken of, without any distinction of *greater* or *less*, it is always to be understood of the former. It is a maxim in the Canon Law, *Excommunicatio simpliciter prolata intelligitur de majori* †. And the view in which the person described in the

It is however obvious to remark, that the opinion here referred to, took it's rise from the distempered imagination of some notorious Liar for the Church, who had more zeal than wit. Before he set up in his Profession, he should at least have learned how to give an air of greater plausibility to his pious fictions. For when it is considered, that it was a part of the original Curse pronounced by God upon fallen Man, "*Dust thou art, and unto Dust shalt thou return*;" whatever should seem to deliver from the fulfillment of this threatening, would most probably be considered as a *Blessing*, rather than as a *Curse*. Yet here we see such an admirable virtue attributed to an Anathema of the Church, that it embalms the body of the deceased, and preserves it from corruption more effectually than all the spices of the East. Besides, the Doctor was surely very unhappy in urging upon us, such a proof of the dreadful nature of the sentence of Excommunication, denounced by the Church. For as we have abundant evidence, that our anathematized Ancestors have long since seen corruption, the only inferences we could fairly draw from these legendary tales, must be, either that the *English* Church could never curse so powerfully as the *Greek* Church; or that by length of time, the curse has lost its efficacy. See *Godolphin's Rep. Can. Append. § 51.*

† *Lyndwood* in *Const. J. Peckham. De Procuratoribus, Lib. I. Tit. 18. Gloss. (b) in verb. Excommunicationi.*

Article is to be considered by true Christians, plainly shews that the greater Excommunication is therein intended.

This sentence of Excommunication in most cases does not take effect, until the ecclesiastical Judge has gone through a certain process prescribed in the Canon Law, which requires that a summons, or previous citation should be issued to the delinquent, before sentence of Excommunication be pronounced against him. But in the case of what the Church accounts more heinous and horrible offences, the delinquent is excommunicated *ipso facto*. The Canons, which are the *open denunciations of the Church*, and thunder out these anathemas, are to be considered in these cases, as superseding the necessity of any previous citation, or process of any ecclesiastical Judge. An Excommunication *ipso facto*, imports in the opinion of *Lyndwood*, *Godolphin*, *Archbishop Wake*, and other Canonists, that "there is no
" need of any admonition, nor of any sentence
" to be pronounced, which the Canon itself
" hath passed, and which is by that means already
" ready promulged upon every one, as soon as
" he comes under the obligation of it. The
" person described stands excommunicated *nullo*
" *hominis ministerio interveniente* *." As all

* *Lyndwood* De officio Archidiaconi, Lib. I. Tit. 10. Gloss. (i) in verb. *ipso facto*. *Godolphin* Rep. Canon. Cap. 42. § 4. *Wake's Appeal*, p. 22.

other

other Excommunications take their penal effect from the time of their being decreed in Court, in case the conditions be not submitted to within the time limited; so the *ipso facto* excommunication takes the same effect, from the moment that the fact is committed. If this be not the true sense and construction of an *ipso facto* Excommunication, there is no distinction at all between such an Excommunication, and that which requires a process in the ecclesiastical Court; for the fact committed is the *ground* of the Excommunication in the latter case, equally as in the former. But this difference of Excommunication *ipso facto*, and of Excommunication to be passed after the fact, is very apparent from the judgment given by the Canonists, in cases of sacrilege. He who committed sacrilege on an ecclesiastical Person, was *ipso facto* excommunicate, while he who was guilty of it in relation to ecclesiastical things, was *to be* excommunicated. But if he who steals an ecclesiastical thing, does at the same time burn the Church, or break it open, then he is *ipso facto* excommunicated *. And that this is the true construction, is farther evident from many of the provincial Constitutions, in which various Offenders are declared to be actually excommunicated, as by the authority of God the Father Almighty, of the blessed Virgin, of all the Saints, and of the Councils

* Johnson's Note on Abp. BONIFACE's Constit. Constit. 3.
-1100

then assembled, without any other monition or process. These general sentences of Excommunication were ordered to be published by every Parish Priest, on the four greater festivals, viz. *Christmas, Easter, Whitsuntide, and All Saints day*, in his Holy Vestments, with Bells tolling, and Candles lighted, before the whole Congregation in the Mother tongue*. The more frequent publication of them was afterwards decreed, with the merciful intention of preventing men from falling under the curse, through ignorance. The Constitution is introduced in this manner: "Since an unknown
 " evil cannot be avoided, and there are many
 " sentences in the councils of the Holy Fathers,
 " by which wicked men are smitten; lest
 " through ignorance they should fall into so
 " dangerous a pit, we charge all the Priests of
 " the province of *Canterbury*, that on every
 " Lord's day immediately after the celebration
 " of a rural Chapter, they openly expound to
 " their respective charges, the following sentences of Excommunication†." The language of the Constitution throughout, clearly evinces, that those several sentences were to be considered as taking effect, immediately upon the

* Vide Constit. Concil. Provinc. Oxon. celeb. edit. per STEPHANUM LANGTON. Introd. et Constit. 4.

† Vide Constit. Jo. PISCCHAM Concil. Provinc. de Reading. Constit. 3.

commission of the crimes, to which they severally refer. I cannot therefore acquit Bishop *Gibson* of the charge of a wilful misrepresentation, in saying, that "where the Canonists speak of "Excommunications *ipso facto*, they are, he "thinks, unanimous that a declaratory sentence "is necessary *;" *i. e.* as the final issue of a process for the conviction of the Offender, after the commission of the fact. For excepting his Lordship, and Dr. *Burn* his Copyist †, I cannot find any one authority for this opinion. And his Lordship seems to have been so conversant with *Lyndwood*, and other writers of this class, that one cannot suppose him to have been ignorant of the different judgment given by them.

The phrase in the Article, *rightly cut off*, means nothing more, than that the offences for which the members of the Church should be excommunicated, should be no other than what are declared to be excommunicable by the Church; and that the sentence should take effect in no other way, and by no other instruments, than what are prescribed in the Canon Law.

It is natural to inquire in the next place, by whom this sentence is incurred according to the

* *Gibson's Codex Jur. Eccles. Angl. Tom. 2. Tit. 46. Cap. IV. Not. d.*

† *Burn's Ecclesiastical Law, Vol. II. p. 201.*

Canons of the Church. For it cannot be doubted, that they are considered in the Article as rightly cut off from the unity of the Church, and rightly excommunicated, who are declared so to be in the Canon Law. And it is a very material requisite to the proof of the rectitude of an Excommunication, that the crime of which the Offender is convicted, is deserving of so severe a censure. The prosecution of this inquiry will furnish many more insuperable objections to a Protestant Dissenter, against subscribing the Article I am now expounding.

As the Church of *England* has herself given us a comment on this part of the Article, we can be in no danger of mistaking her meaning. But it is difficult to conceive, how any Protestant Dissenters can consistently accord with her in judgment. Can it in our account be a crime deserving of such a censure, to affirm that the Church of *England* by law established, is not a true and Apostolick Church, teaching and maintaining the doctrine of the Apostles*? For notwithstanding the most affectionate esteem for many of her members, as members of the true Church of Christ; and the most zealous attachment to many of the doctrines of the Church of *England*; we may yet imagine such a definition of the Church, as *established by Law*, implies

* Canon III. of 1603.

that she teaches and maintains *no other* doctrines than those of the Apostles, and that her frame, constitution, and government are entirely consonant to the Scripture model. And if such were our sentiments, we could not conscientiously dissent from her communion. Is a man in our account justly accursed, for affirming that the form of worship contained in the book of Common Prayer, and administration of the Sacraments, contains *some* things in it repugnant to the scriptures *? Would Protestant Dissenters devote a man to the Devil, for saying that *some* of the thirty-nine Articles, are in *some part* superstitious or erroneous, and such as he cannot with a good conscience subscribe unto †? Or if he thinks that the rites and ceremonies of the Church of *England* are superstitious, and such as he cannot with a good conscience approve ‡? What think we of the cross in Baptism, of worshipping to the East in repeating the Creed, or bowing at the name of Jesus, &c.? Should we esteem a man separated from Christ, for entertaining an opinion that the government of the Church by Archbishops, Diocesan Bishops, Deans, Archdeacons, and the rest that bear office in the same, is Antichristian, or repugnant to the word of God §? For notwithstanding the most accurate and diligent study of the New Testa-

* Canon IV.
§ Canon VII.

† Canon V.

‡ Canon VI.

ment, neither our Forefathers, nor we, have ever yet been able to find out so much as the names of many of these Officers, nor the most distant hints of the distinct characters they sustain in the government of that Church. Should we banish a man from the communion of the Church, for thinking that the form and manner of making and consecrating Bishops, Priests, or Deacons, contains *some* things in it which are also repugnant to the word of God *? Should we excommunicate any for separating from that Church, and combining themselves together in a new brotherhood †? Does this tremendous sentence justly fall upon all those, who say, that such as are Schismatics, in the judgment of the Church, may truly take unto them the name of another Church, not established by Law ‡? Is the same censure in our opinion due to saying, that other meetings than those which were held and allowed by the laws of the Land as such, when the Canons were drawn up, may rightly challenge to themselves the name of true and lawful Churches §? Or is it justly incurred in the judgment of Protestant Dissenters, by believing that Ministers and Lay persons may join together, and make rules and orders in causes ecclesiastical, and lawfully submit themselves to be ruled and governed by them ||?

* Canon VIII.
§ Canon XI.

† Canon IX,
|| Canon XII.

‡ Canon X.

Yet in all, or any of these cases, the Church has given it as her judgment, that the persons so offending, are rightly cut off and excommunicated. Nay in many of the cases she pronounces them actually excommunicated *ipso facto*. And if they do not recant within forty days, they may be committed to prison by a Writ *De excommunicato capiendo*; where they must lie till they perish, if they do not retract. For without such a retraction, not even the Archbishop himself can restore them; and in several of the instances above recited, supposing a retraction takes place, none but the *Archbishop* can cancel the guilt, reverse the sentence, or restore the Offender*.

Besides

* When the several limitations of the power of restoring Offenders, to the Archiepiscopal function, are seriously considered; one cannot help thinking, that the Archbishops of the Realm have peculiar occasion, to adopt the words of the Apostle, "*Brethren pray for us.*" For how tremendous must be their situation, should they happen to fall under the censure of any of those Canons. They cannot help or restore one another, as their *Archiepiscopal* powers are circumscribed within the bounds of their respective Provinces. It is laid down as a maxim in the Canon Law, *Nullus Judex potest excommunicare, vel absolvere extra suam Provinciam.* So that the case of either would be desperate—absolutely remediless and hopeless—far beyond the reach of the mercy of God, or the efficacy of the Blood of Jesus, for want of the indispensable requisite of an Archiepiscopal Mediator. Were I a Clergyman of the Church of England,
and

Besides the above exceptionable cases, more particularly affecting Protestant Dissenters, every benevolent mind, one should imagine, must dissent from the doctrine of this Article, when we consider how much farther the curse of the greater Excommunication has been extended, by the more ancient and equally authentick Canons of the Church.

The Clergy wisely provident of their own security, improved the dread of this tremendous sentence, to serve the purposes of their own worldly advantage ; and to render their parishioners scrupulously exact in tithing Mint, Annise, and Cummin. So that were it not for the prevailing custom of compounding for the Tithe, the Church of *England*, it is to be feared, would have comparatively very few members left. I refer particularly to the Constitutions of STEPHEN LANGTON, Archbishop of *Canterbury*, now in full force ; in which this sentence is pronounced upon all “ that do not pay Tithe of
“ the fruits of the Earth, and of Trees, of Hay
“ wherever it grew, of Acorns †, Garden Herbs,
“ Bees,

and could persuade myself that the Canons were agreeable to the word of God, I would not be an Archbishop for ten thousand Worlds.

† The words of the Constitution are, *De Pannagio porcerum*, which some English Canonists have rendered, “ *The Pannage of Swine.*” But this translation is as unintelligible

“ Bees, Food of Animals, and their Young,
“ Wool, Milk, Cheeses, however made, and all
“ things yearly renewing, Fishings, Huntings,
“ Mills, Trade, Handicrafts, and other honest
“ Labours, and of all things due by Law or
“ Custom †.” The strictest Pharisee would be
in danger of falling short, in some or other of
these instances.

At another provincial Council it was urged,
“ That some degenerate sons of Holy Mother
“ Church, not considering the Heavenly favour
“ in giving them nine parts, do obstruct the
“ Ministers of Christ in divers manners, by
“ exquisite malicious inventions, in the free
“ taking of the tenth part. Some permit them
“ freely to take the Tithes, but not to carry
“ them by the accustomable ways and roads;
“ but maliciously compel them to be carried by
“ long round about windings and turnings, &c.
“ &c. &c.—To make wholesome provision

gible to a common reader, as the obsolete original. The translation above given, is founded upon the Gloss of Lyndwood on the similar phrase *Pannagii sylvarum*, which occurs in one of the Constitutions of Robert Winchelsea, Archbishop of Canterbury, and is thus explained by him, “ *Id est, Pastu porcorum in nemoribus & in sylvis, utputa de glandibus, & aliis fructibus arborum sylvestrium quarum fructus aliter non solent colligi.*” Vide Lyndwood Provinciale, Lib. 3. Tit. 16. p. 200. Gloss. f.

† Constit. 4.

“ against

“ against such malice and wrong, wickedly
 “ committed in contempt of God and the
 “ Church, by the Oracle of these presents,” says
 the Constitution, “ we firmly forbid,” all such
 offences “ under pain of the greater Excommu-
 “ nication, which we will that all and every
 “ transgressor do incur *ipso facto* *.”

Some have thought, that however severe the Church might judge it proper to be upon her own members, it is nevertheless very unreasonable, that she should claim the power of cursing and excommunicating such, as never belonged to her Communion. But this practice seems to be derived from the similar exercise of the same pretended authority, in the Church of *Rome*. Nor am I much astonished at the claim, when I consider, that the sentence of Excommunication has heretofore been passed by a very respectable authority in some Churches, even upon such creatures, as are not the subjects of God's moral government. For we are told that St. *Bernard* solemnly denounced it against the *Flies* †. I am sorry I cannot inform the reader, what was the offence which they committed against the Church; but as it is most probable, they never

* Vide Constit. Provinc. *Gulielmi La Zouche* Archiep. *Eborac.* Const. 3.

† Pet. de Natal. in vitâ *Bernardi*.

performed

performed any voluntary penance in order to their reconciliation; I take it for granted they all die under the sentence, and in the judgment of the Holy Father, go to the Devil.

Another objection to the Article now under consideration, is derived from the prescribed condition of restoration to the Church, after having been rightly cut off and excommunicated. The excommunicated person is "to be taken of the whole multitude of the Faithful, as an Heathen and Publican, until he be openly reconciled by Penance."

Now it appears to me that Penance and Repentance are two very different things; the latter of which is essentially requisite, to the restoration of an excluded offender to the fellowship of the Church; and that the former is by no means a proper substitute or equivalent. The very sound of Penance is ungrateful to the ear of a Protestant; and though it may be a very proper condition of absolution in the Church of Rome, yet surely it ought to be discarded by every Protestant establishment.

In order to the better understanding this clause of the Article, it will be necessary distinctly to consider the doctrine of Penance, as held by the Church of England.

The

The original idea of doing Penance, is to suffer the infliction of some corporal punishment or disgrace; such, says *Lyndwood*, as thrusting into a Monastery, Imprisonment, Scourging, Beating with a Cudgel, Branding with a Mark *, &c. *Et talis pena corporalis*, says the same Author, *major debet imponi vili, quam Nobili* †. It was anciently distinguished into three kinds, viz. *solemn, publick, and private*. The first was attended with many very ridiculous and superstitious rites ‡. The second is that which is done

* *Lyndwood Provinciale*, Lib. V. Tit. 15.

† *Lyndwood Prov.* Lib. III. Tit. 28. Gloss. (b) in verb. *Pœnitentias corporales*.

‡ Sollemnis est, quæ fit in Capite Quadragesimæ, quando omnes Pœnitentes, qui publicam suscipiunt aut susceperunt Pœnitentiam, ante fores Ecclesiæ se repræsentant Episcopo Civitatis, Sacco induti, nudis pedibus, vultibus in terram demissis; reos se esse, ipso habitu & vultu protestantes; [ut est in Conc. *Agath.* ubi adjicitur, "Ibi adesse debent
" Decani, i. e. Archipresbyteri Parochiarum, & Presbyteri
" Pœnitentium, qui eorum conversationem diligenter inspicere debent, & secundum modum Culpæ Pœnitentiam
" per prefixos Gradus injungere, Post hæc, eos in Ecclesiam
" introducant, & cum omni Clero Septem Pœnitentiales
" Psalmos in terrâ prostratus Episcopus, cum lachrymis
" pro eorum Absolutione, decantet;—& cum gemitu &
" crebris suspiriis denunciaret eis, quod sicut Adam projectus est de Paradiso, ita ipsi pro Peccatis ab Ecclesiâ
" abjiciuntur. Post hæc, jubeat Ministris, ut eos extra
" Januas Ecclesiæ expellant: Clerus verò prosequatur eos, cum Responorio. [In sudore vultus tui vesceris pane
" tuo,

done in the face of the Church, without so much solemnity; and is that to which I think the Article most probably here refers. By the third was understood nothing more, than what was enjoined by the Priest in private confession.

The doctrine of Penance as held forth in the Article now under consideration, may be farther considered either as *performed*, or *commuted*; for in both cases it is equally efficacious as a Restorative. When publick Penance is to be performed, the Offender “ presents himself a little “ before Morning prayer in the Church porch, “ in a white linnen garment, reaching from his “ head to his heels. In this garb he is obliged “ with tears to beg the prayers of all that pass “ by. Soon after he is called into the Church. “ As soon as he is over the threshold, he ought “ to fall down on his face, and kiss the ground. “ Presently the Church-wardens lift him up, “ and set him in some higher place of the “ Church, where he may be best seen of the “ People, and hear the Minister's reproofs and “ admonitions relating to his grievous sin. “ When the Penitent has religiously promised,

“ tuo, &c.] ut videntes Sanctam Ecclesiam pro facinoribus
“ suis tremefactam, arque commotam, non parvi pendant
“ Pœnitentiam. In Sacra autem Domini Cœnâ, rursus ab
“ eorum Decanis, & eorum Presbyteris, Ecclesiæ liminibus
“ represententur.] *Lyndwood, Lib. V. Tit. 16.*

“ that

“ that he will for the future watch more diligently against the temptations of the flesh,
 “ and has craved pardon of God and the
 “ Church, for the scandal he has given, he is
 “ then *absolved* by the Minister *.” This is Dr. *Nichols’s* account, which is pretty accurate, excepting that he has omitted to mention the white Wand which the offender should hold in his hand, and the Stool on which he should stand.—a circumstance, which most probably gave rise to the proverb, of *The Stool of Repentance*. To which I may add, that in the case of Incest or Incontinency, the Sinner is usually enjoined to perform his publick Penance in the *Cathedral*, or some *publick Market*; and as an additional token of his Humiliation, is commanded to be both *bare-legged*, and *bare-headed*†. Thus is an offending Member of the Church, who has incurred the sentence of Excommunication, “ openly reconciled by penance.” An Instance of this kind, though not strictly canonical, in the case of a Man convicted of Fornication, together with a discourse made to him in a Country parish Church, was published in the year 1733, by the Rev. Mr. *Whatley*, Rector of *Toft* in the diocese of *Lincoln*, who

* See *Nichols’s* Defence of the Church, Part II. Chap. xvi. P. 349.

† *Godolphin’s Repertorium Canonicum* Appendix, § 56.

recommended his discourse to the consideration of the Committee of the House of Commons, appointed to inquire into the abuses of the ecclesiastical Courts; and dedicated it to the then Lord Bishop of *London*.

The present forms of confession made use of upon these occasions, are not near so particular as those enjoined in the ancient penitential Canons; wherein among other confessions made before his Lord and Saviour Christ, and before the Holy Altar, and the Relicks in the Church, and before his Shrift, and the Lord's Mass Priest, the penitent Offender was also commanded to use the following expressions. "I confess all
 " the sins of my Body by my skin, by my flesh,
 " by my bones, by my sinews, by my reins, by
 " my gristles, by my tongue, by the lips, by
 " the palate, by the teeth, by the hair, by the
 " marrow, by every thing soft or hard, wet or
 " dry, &c. *." The Shrift or ghostly Physician was to squeeze out the crimes of the Penitent; but if he accused himself in conformity to the tenor, and in the language of the Canons, he was thought to "act like a man."

When we consider the scriptural doctrine of Repentance, it is difficult to justify the restoration and absolution of the Offender, immediately

* See Abp. DUNSTAN's penitential Canons, § 8.

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upon

upon the performance of Penance ; for there can be little doubt that many who have stood in a white sheet in the Church, have at the expiration of the limited time, only repented of their disgrace. And if indeed Penance is to be considered as a *sign* of repentance, I know not how the continued use of it can be reconciled with the 25th Article of the Church of *England*, in which the five Popish Sacraments, are said “ not to be counted for Sacraments of the “ Gospel.” Since if we adhere to the Church’s own definition of a Sacrament, Penance must in this view be one, as being “ an outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace” of Repentance ; and might not improperly be called the *fourth* Sacrament of the Church of *England*. The only way to evade this conclusion, must be to consider it as the *substitute* rather than as the *sign* of Repentance. But though this is more agreeable to fact, and to other views given of this doctrine by the publick Injunctions of the Church, it is far from being in such a view more agreeable to the word of God, or a more proper condition of reconciling notorious sinners to the privileges of the Church.

But whatever objections there are, against a reconciliation of Offenders by the *performance* of Penance, there are many more, and much stronger, to allowing the same influence and efficacy

efficacy to the *redemption of it by money*, commonly called the *commutation of Penance*; which requires some farther consideration.

By the statute 9 *Edw. II.* Cap. I. it was enacted, "If a Prelate enjoin Penance *pecuniary* to a man for his offence, and it be demanded, the King's prohibition shall hold place. Notwithstanding if Prelates enjoin a Penance *corporal*, and the Party will *redeem* such Penance by *money*, if money be demanded before a Judge Spiritual, the King's prohibition shall hold no place." Hence the practice of commutation prevailed in the Church, to the no small scandal of our Holy Religion. Dr. *Nichols* speaks of it, as a provision made for the accommodation of persons of a superior rank, "whose honour would suffer by publick Penance; and who are on that account allowed to ransom themselves from the reproach of it, by a good round sum of money * †." A practice so infamous, could

* *Nichols* ubi supra, p. 350.

† A Writer to whom the learned World is greatly indebted, for a very valuable account of the Doctrine, &c. of the *Greek Church*; has taken occasion in the course of that work, to defend and applaud the Constitution of the Church of *England*, upon certain general principles of analogy. And among other encomiums passed upon this establishment, he describes it as "*generous in its discipline.*"—

could hardly fail of giving offence to every serious professor of Religion, in any period of the Church. And so we find the fact to have been. For the Commons in Parliament 1st R. II. and 1st H. V. petitioned that there might be no Commutations at all. The Petitioners however never succeeded; but in some measure to obviate the scandal, several regulations were established in different periods. By one, the Commutation was limited to great and urgent causes; but this was explained by the Lower

a compliment which I confess is unintelligible to me, unless it is to be referred to the established doctrine of the *Commutation of Penance*. In this respect, I fear the Church is too generous in her discipline, to the rich Offenders in her Communion. But it is such a species of generosity, as one should imagine could scarcely be applauded by her warmest advocates, if any respect is to be had to moral fitness, in the administration of ecclesiastical censures. If the encomium should be applied to the *actual exercise* of discipline, upon the prophane and licentious, her generosity must consist in a general negligence; and so I apprehend there is a great impropriety in the expression. But if it be meant of her discipline, as *delineated in the ecclesiastical Laws*, generosity and benevolence must be set at an irreconcilable, and most unnatural variance. For the Canons breathe a spirit of cruel severity, especially against all who are enemies to human inventions in matters of religion; and with the most unmerciful generosity to the Prince of darkness, devote immortal souls to everlasting destruction, for the most trivial offences against the authority of the Church. A similar generosity to this, appears in the Office of *orthodox Sunday*, used in the Greek Church. See Dr. John Glen King's *Rites and Ceremonies of the Greek Church*, p. 271, 404.

House of Convocation, A. D. 1580, so as exactly to answer Dr. *Nichols's* account of it, as intended for persons of great value or dignity—a truly great and urgent cause. Another regulation provided, that it should be made only by the privity and advice of the Bishop. Another, that the money should be applied to pious or charitable uses. Another, that if the crime was publick and notorious, the satisfaction made to the Church, should be signified to the Congregation where the Offender dwelt; with publick professions of his submission and repentance. And another, that the favour of Commutation should not be granted a second time, to the same person, for the same fault*.

† These regulations seem however to have been very little regarded; so that the great abuses which prevailed in the management of this business, induced Archbishop *Tennison* to apply to King *William*, to enforce an attention to them, by inserting an Injunction to this purpose, among the rest which were published in the year 1694 †. In the reign of Queen *Anne*, the

* See the *Articuli pro Clero*, A. D. 1584, & *Constitutiones Ecclesiasticæ*, A. D. 1597. *De moderandâ solennis Pœnitentiæ commutatione*: in Bp. *Sparrow's* Collection of Articles, &c. And also Bp. *Gibson's* Codex, Tom. 2. Tit. 46. Cap. 3. Note (t.)

† See Injunction 17, and the Life of Abp. *Tennison*, p. 41. Edit. 2.

Convocation made some farther trifling regulations. But the Reader should be informed, that none of these regulations whether more ancient or modern, are held to be in force at this day. So says Bishop *Gibson*. However I am inclined to think, that one or two of the more ancient, which stand upon a different authority from the rest, must be considered as still binding upon all Ordinaries. I refer particularly to one of Bp. *Stratford's* Constitutions, which prohibits the repetition of the Grant as above specified, and decrees that a certain moderation should be used, for the honour of the Judge, and the ease of the Offender; or that, in the words of the Constitution, "the Receiver may not be thought rapacious, nor the Giver too much aggrieved *." But however well this regulation was intended, it is liable to an interpretation, which no man who has any just sense of moral obligations, can reflect on without detestation. For if it means any thing, it imports, that the spiritual market should be kept low, and guards against putting too high a price upon the pardon of sin.

The candid and considerate Reader will naturally indulge the hope or presumption, that this Commutation is never allowed, excepting in cases of very slight offence against the authority of the Church. Or he will probably conclude, that

* *Stratford's* Extrav. 1342. Ex. 9.

however

however far it might be extended in times of Popish darkness, it could never be carried to any length since the Reformation. What his sentiments and reflections will be, when he finds there is evidence to the contrary, I know not. But lest my own veracity should be called in question, by barely asserting a thing so incredible in itself, I shall insert at length, the Letters testimonial issued by Archbishop ABBOT, to certify the commutation of Penance, as accepted by Dr. *Ridley*, his Vicar General, in the case of one *James Gates* of *Siddleham* in the County of *Suffex*, who was convicted of having committed *adultery* or *fornication* with one *Joanna Pratt*, who had formerly been his maid servant *. This certi-

* Universis & singulis Christi fidelibus, presentes Literas nostras Testimoniales visuris, lecturis, vel auditoris, aut quos infrascripta tangunt seu tangere poterint quomodolibet in futurum Georgius, &c. Salutem in Domino sempiternam ac fidem indubiam presentibus adhiberi. Ad Universitatis vestrae notitiam deducimus, & deduci volumus per presentes, Quod dilectus nobis in Christo Magister Thomas Ridley, Legum Doctor Vicarius in Spiritualibus Generalis & Officialis principalis legitime constitutus, in quodam negotio Correctionis sive Reformationis contra Jacobum Gates de *Siddleham* in Comitatu *Suffex*, *Cicestrensis* Diocesis praedictae nostraeque *Cantuariensis* Provinciae, propter adulterium sive fornicationem cum quadam *Joanna Pratt* ejus nuper famula per eum commissae & perpetratae ex officio suo mero rite & legitime procedens (audito prius per eum dicto negotio, ac consideratis Circumstantiis ejusdem) tandem die datae praesentium, ex certis causis & considerationibus eum

certificate was granted, above fifty years after the present Articles were compiled, and is therefore an abundant proof, what was the invariable judgment of the Church concerning the efficacy of Commutation, and the extent of it's application; and shews us the sense of the Article now under consideration, as to the methods of reconciling spiritual Delinquents.

Before we dismiss this Article, it will be proper to investigate the meaning of the last clause. When the Offender is reconciled by Penance, he is to be received into the Church, by a "*Judge that hath authority thereunto.*" Now unless a man would subscribe blindfold, he will naturally ask, Pray who is he?

The description of this Judge as laid down in many ecclesiastical Constitutions, will not give the generality of readers, any distinct or proper

& ejus animum in hac parte legitimè moven^r Pœnitentiam publicam, aliàs dicto Jacobo Gates pro Crimine prædicto injunctam, in mulctam & pœnam pœcuniariam in pios & Charitativos usus, juxta juris exigentiam, & Canonem dudum in ea parte edit^r & promulgat^r distribuend^r & erogand^r commutavit; prout ex Registro nostro Principali plenius liquet & apparet. In cujus rei testimonium, Sigillum quo in hac parte utimur præsentibus apponi fecimus. Dat^r Decimo sexto die mensis, Junii, Anno Domini millesimo sexcentesimo decimo quinto & nostræ Translationis Anno quinto. Vide *Gibson* Cod. Jur. Tom. II. Append. § xix.

ideas

ideas of the several offices comprehended under it. For in the more usual language of the Canon Law, this Judge is called the *Ordinary*, or Person exercising of right episcopal jurisdiction. The acceptation of this term in the *Common Law*, seems to restrain it to such, as have ordinary jurisdiction in causes ecclesiastical *immediate* to the King. Whence it is most properly, and primarily to be understood of the Bishop of the Diocese; who is said to have such a jurisdiction *jure proprio, & non per deputationem*. But in the *Civil Law*, whence the word *Ordinarius* is taken, it signifies *any* Judge authorized to take cognizance of causes *proprio suo jure*, as he is a magistrate, and not by way of deputation or delegation. And it is certain, that in the *Canon Law* it comprehends all those, who under the Bishop exercise any ecclesiastical jurisdiction, whether by *right*, by *privilege*, or *custom*. And thus we are to understand the description of an authorized judge in the Article, as intending not only the Bishop, but also Vicars General, Chancellors, Commissaries, Archdeacons, and Officials.

I would gladly refer the Reader to some passages in scripture, for an account of the character and claims of these Officers in the Apostolical Church of *England*. But as I cannot find any account of their Institution, in the original

original records of the Christian Church, we must look into the Canon Law, in order to understand their several claims and distinctions *.

The *Chancellor* of a Diocese is a Church Lawyer, or the Bishop's Lawyer, whose jurisdiction extends throughout the whole Diocese, and who supplies the Bishop's absence in all matters and causes ecclesiastical. By this Chancellor, the Bishop keeps his Court according to the ecclesiastical Laws, in all matters pertaining to his jurisdiction. And as his authority is the same with the Bishop's, and extended throughout the whole Diocese, he is called the Bishop's *Vicar General*, and was also anciently intitled *Oculus Episcopi*. This is said to be the same office formerly held by the persons, whom the Law calls *Ecclesiædici*, or *Episcoporum Ecdici*. By the ancient Canon Law, a Layman was excluded the office of a spiritual Judge. But by an Act of Parliament at the Reformation †, Doctors of Law were allowed to exercise all manner of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. So that the office of Chancellor is now most commonly held by

* For a more particular account, of the distinct characters and powers of these ecclesiastical Officers, I refer the Reader to *Lyndwood's Provinciale*, *Dr. Ridley's View of the Civil and Ecclesiastical Law*, *Godolphin's Repertorium Canonicum*, *Bp. Gibson's Introduction to his Codex*, &c. and *Dr. Burn's Ecclesiastical Law*.

† 37 Hen. VIII. Cap. 17.

Civilians, who are Laymen ; though Clergymen who have been bred to the study of the Civil Law, are by no means excluded from holding the office. And some such Chancellors there now are.

A *Commissary* is a title of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, applied to such as exercise it in some remote parts of a Diocese, so far distant from the Bishop's chief Consistory, that his Chancellor cannot without great inconvenience, call the subjects before him in that Court. Likewise such parishes as are the Bishop's Peculiars, and exempt from the Archdeacon's jurisdiction, fall under the cognizance of the Commissaries. Their authority is restrained to *some certain parts* of the Diocese ; and to *some certain causes* of the jurisdiction, limited to them by the Bishops. For which reason, it is said, the Law calls them *Officiales Foranei, quasi Officiales astricti cuidam foro Diæceseos tantum*. Thus are they distinguished from Chancellors. By the stat. 21 *Hen. VIII.* and 37 *Hen. VIII.* Doctors of the Civil Law may hold the office of a Commissary.

An *Archdeacon* is described in the Canon Law, to be one who hath obtained a dignity in a Cathedral Church, who has the priority among the Deacons, and is first in jurisdiction next after the Bishop. He hath some jurisdiction of
common

common right, though it may vary according to circumstances, and the custom of the place; and therefore in some cases it is said to be *Jurisdiclio Ordinaria*, and in others *Delegata*. It does not however like the Chancellor's extend throughout the Diocese, but is limited within the bounds of his Archdeaconry. But so far as his authority reaches, *in omnibus vicem Episcopi gerit*. On this account, he was also anciently dignified with the title of *Oculus Episcopi*, or the Bishop's Eye*. Hence also he has under the Bishop a power of Excommunication, and injunction of Penances, &c. Some of the Archdeacons hold their office by *Prescription*, some by *Law*, and some by *Covenant*. Where the jurisdiction of the Archdeacon is by *Prescription*, or *de jure*, it operates in law to the exclusion of the jurisdiction of the Bishop himself. So that a prohibition will lie for such an Archdeacon,

* As the title of *Oculus Episcopi* was formerly given both to the Chancellor and Archdeacon, we may charitably conclude that the censures of some well-meaning persons, who reproach the Bishops with negligence in the duties of pastoral inspection, are not so well founded as they imagine. For since the Canon Law has given them *two eyes* in the persons of these their representatives, they may be allowed to save their own; seeing the God of nature has thought two sufficient for one man, of whatever rank or dignity. At least the Chancellors and Archdeacons should have their share of the blame, too justly due to the prevailing negligence of inquiry into the preaching, and lives of the Clergy.

against

against the Bishop, if he intermeddles juridically with any matters or things within such Archdeacons. But a prohibition will not lie where the Archdeacon's jurisdiction is only by Contract, or Covenant.

The term *Official* is applied in common to the Chancellor, who is *Official principal*, and to the Commissaries, and Archdeacons, as severally officiating in the exercise of episcopal jurisdiction. In like manner, a person duly authorized by the Archdeacon to act in his place, is also called his *Official*, and stands in the same relation to the Archdeacon, as the Chancellor does to the Bishop. Thus this character is commonly united with the preceding, in the exercise of the power annexed to it; though it is distinguished in the commission. So far however as the proper duty of an *Official*, is to be considered as distinct from that of Chancellors, Commissaries, and Archdeacons, it simply respects those matters of *temporal cognizance*, which have been granted to the ecclesiastical Courts, by the concession of Princes. But the distinction has long since been set aside, and with very good reason; as Temporals and Spirituals are blended together, throughout the whole constitution of the Church.

Such is the general view given us in the Canon Law, of the several offices above considered. It
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is foreign to my purpose, to enter into a more minute explication of them, or to consider the disputes about the degrees of their subordination to the Bishop, and other points of ceremony, of which the distinction between *ordinary*, and *delegated* jurisdiction, has been a fruitful source. But it may not be amiss just to inquire into their origin. The great Bishop *Stillingfleet*, has given us a very honest and particular account of this, in his treatise *Of the Duties and Rights of the Parochial Clergy*.

“ *Lanfranc* was the first who made an Arch-
 “ deacon with jurisdiction in his See. And
 “ *Thomas* first Archbishop of *York*, after the
 “ Conquest, was the first who divided his Diocese
 “ into Archdeaconries; and so did *Remigius*,
 “ Bishop of *Lincoln*, his large Diocese into seven
 “ Archdeaconries, saith *H. of Huntingdon*. And
 “ so it was with the rest; of which there were
 “ two occasions, 1. the laying aside the *Core-*
 “ *piscopi* in the Western parts, as assuming too
 “ much to themselves. 2. The publick services
 “ which the Bishops were more strictly tied to,
 “ as the King’s Barons in the *Norman* times;
 “ which was the reason not only of taking in
 “ Archdeacons, but likewise of Archpresbyters
 “ or rural Deans, who had some inspection into
 “ the several Deanaries, and assisted the Bishop
 “ in such things, as they were appointed to do;
 “ and

“ and then came in the other ecclesiastical
 “ Officers, as *Vicars General, Chancellors, Com-*
 “ *missaries, &c.* for we read not of them here
 “ at all in the *Saxon* times; but about the time
 “ of *Henry* the II. the Bishops took them for
 “ their assistance in dispatch of causes, when
 “ the King required their strict attendance on
 “ the publick affairs in the supreme Court of
 “ Parliament *.”

Here it is plainly allowed, that whatever claims these Officers may now have to the exercise of their authority *de jure Communi*, they have none *de jure Divino*; though we naturally look for the latter, in the Officers of an *Apostolical* Church. But on the contrary, when the Bishops became too much entangled with the affairs of Legislation, to pursue their spiritual Warfare, one corruption proved the parent of another.

If the power of these subordinate Judges had been absolutely unlimited, some important distinctions of the Hierarchy, might have lost the respect which is due to their pre-eminence. The Canon Law has therefore made ample provision against any inconvenience of this kind. It seems to be universally agreed by the Canonists, that Archdeacons cannot inflict pecuniary Penance, unless warranted by prescrip-

* *Stillingfleet's Ecclesiastical Cases*, p. 146.

tion.

tion. The Legatine Constitutions of *Othobon*, do expressly prohibit them from taking any money, for any crime that is mortal and notorious, or which may occasion scandal; and ordain that they should punish all such offences, with a just animadversion. The reasons assigned for this prohibition are very substantial and scriptural. Because, says one of the Constitutions, "God Almighty, whose are all things, accepts no price for any crime, neither requires an holocaust for sin.—Because the sinner fears no crime, which he thinks he can redeem with money.—And by this means the evil inclination is not diminished, but rather an authority and licence is thereby granted to sin*."

This was certainly sound doctrine, though delivered and confirmed by a Legate from the Apostolick See of *Rome*. I only lament that the Canonists have not informed us, why the same reasons do not equally apply to Bishops, as to Archdeacons; for I am utterly at a loss to conceive, that the payment of consideration money for sin, should be more acceptable to God, when enjoined by a Bishop, than if it had only the Archdeacon's warrant. *Lyndwood* in his gloss upon this Constitution, assures us that these reasons are not to be applied to Bishops; but has left us wholly in the dark, as to the

* *Constit. Provinc. Domini Othoboni*, Tit. 19.

rationality of the distinction. It is to be remembered, he was himself a Bishop.

A similar respect was paid to the superior authority of the episcopal Office, in granting *pecuniary* absolutions, by the Canons of 1571; which do also explicitly exclude other ecclesiastical Judges, besides the Archdeacon, from the right of commuting Penance, unless by special commission, in the following words.

Commutationem autem injunctæ poenitentiae, nec Cancellarius faciet, nec Archidiaconus, nec Officialis, nec Commissarius. Ea potestas multis gravibus de causis Episcopo soli reservabitur, aut si quem alium Episcopus ad eum usum *speciali mandato* designabit *.

Several other Injunctions of the Church perfectly harmonize with the preceding declarations. But besides the various limitations in favour of the Bishops, many of the Canons have also reserved to the ARCHBISHOP, as was hinted above, the sole exclusive power and authority of restoring the most heinous Offenders †. To him some special powers of absolution are likewise granted by the statute Law of the Land. For when the payment of Peter-pence, and other

* Liber quorundam Canonum, 1571, p. 230, in Bp. Sparrow's Collection.

† See page 137.

Papal exactions were abolished; the power of Dispensations was taken from the Pope, and vested in the Archbishop of *Canterbury* by 25 *Hen. VIII.* Cap. 21. Instead of suing to *Rome* for any Dispensations, or other Instruments whatever, it was provided by that Statute, that they should be “ had and obtained in manner “ and form following, and none otherwise. “ That is to say, the Archbishop of *Canterbury* “ for the time being, and his Successors, shall “ have power and authority from time to time “ by their discretions, to give, grant and dispose, “ by an Instrument under the Seal of the said “ Archbishop, unto your Majesty, and to your “ Heirs and Successors, Kings of this Realm, “ as well all manner such licences, dispensations, compositions, faculties, grants, rescripts, “ delegacies, instruments, and other writings, “ for causes not being contrary or repugnant “ to the Holy Scriptures, and laws of God, as “ heretofore has been used and accustomed to “ be had and obtained by your Highness, or “ any your most noble Progenitors, or any of “ your or their Subjects, at the See of *Rome*, “ or any person or persons by authority of the “ same; and all other licences, dispensations, “ faculties, compositions, grants, rescripts, delegacies, instruments, and other writings in, “ for, and upon all such causes and matters, “ as shall be convenient and necessary to be “ had,

" had, for the honour and surety of your
 " Highness, your Heirs and Successors, and
 " the wealth and profit of this your Realm."
 And by the same Statute it is provided, that
 in case the Archbishop shall obstinately refuse to
 grant any such Dispensation, he shall incur the
 penalty limited by the King, in the writ of
 Injunction. And his Majesty may then com-
 mission two other spiritual Prelates to grant the
 said Dispensation; which by this Act is ren-
 dered of as good value, strength, and effect, and
 as beneficial to the Transgressor, as if it had
 been obtained under the name and seal of the
 said Archbishop. I am sure I do not at all
 question it. To prevent mistakes it is necessary
 however to add, that this *spiritual, apostolical*
 power can in neither case be exercised to purpose
 unless quickened to action by the co-operation
 of certain Fees, to be paid to the Officers of
 the Court. For carrying the purposes of this
 Act into execution, the Archbishop has a stand-
 ing Officer, called *The Master of the Faculties* *.

From

* The pious Bp. Jewel in his celebrated *Apology of the Church of England*, upbraids the Church of Rome with her corrupt management of the Keys; and thus states the opposition between the doctrine of the two Churches, upon this point.

" Seeing the same word was given to all, and the Key
 " which pertains to all, is but one; we say that the power
 " of all Ministers as to binding and loosing is one and the

From the preceding account of the several Officers entrusted with ecclesiastical jurisdiction, we may learn the genuine sense, and full extent of the phrase in the Article. There was an evident propriety in making use of so general a description, as that of "*a Judge that hath authority thereunto*;" because in different parts of a Diocese, under different degrees of guilt,

" same; and *we say*, that even the Pope himself, notwithstanding his flatterers, do so sweetly sooth him up with these words, *I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*; as if they belonged to him, and to no other mortal under heaven; except he makes it his business to bend and subdue the consciences of men to the word of God, we deny that even he (as I said) can either open or shut, or has at all the Keys; and although he doth teach and instruct the people (which I wish he would sometimes do truly, and at last be persuaded to believe it is as least some part of his duty and office) but yet if he did so, his key would be neither *better* nor *greater* than that of others; for who made that difference? Who taught him to open more learnedly, or *absolve more powerfully* than his Brethren." *Jewel's Apology*, Chap. 2. § 8.

With submission to the judgment of others, I am of opinion that in this instance, the good Bishop through an excess of filial duty and affection, rather stretched a point to serve the cause of his Holy Mother. Several provisions of the ancient canon-Law then in force, and the Statute above quoted, speak a very different language from his Lordship. And it is certain that the Church proceeded upon quite opposite principles, in the Canons of 1603. So that I apprehend, the Archbishop of *Canterbury* is to the full as much interested in the questions proposed in the Apology, as the Pope of *Rome* himself.

according to the different quality, rank, and substance of the Offender, and in other various circumstances, the authorized Judge might happen to be either the Archdeacon, or the Commissary, or the Chancellor, or the Bishop, or the Archbishop. Hence also we must infer, that though Protestant Dissenting Congregations may excommunicate Offenders, they have, according to the doctrine of the Article, no power to reconcile and restore them; since they have no such authorized Judges in their Communion.

The Expositors of this Article, are exceedingly tender and cautious of entering into a particular examination of it; but so far as they go, they justify the interpretation above given. It is probable they might say the less, as knowing it to be sufficiently expounded by the Canons and Injunctions of the Church.

The only thing remarkable in *Rogers's* exposition of it, is this: That in the list of *Errors* and *Adversaries* to the truth of the Article; the second class consists of those "which allow the censure of Excommunication so it be done not (as with us it is), says he, by Commissaries, Chancellors, or Bishops, but in every *Parish*, and that either by the *whole Congregation*, or by the *Eldership*, and the *whole Church*; or by every *Minister*, yea every *Member* of the

" Church; or finally, if not by, yet not without
 " the consent of his Pastor, who is to be excom-
 " municated *.

Welchman in a note upon the clause, con-
 cerning the Judge that hath authority, says,
 " i. e. the Bishop, or he at least, to whom this
 " episcopal authority is delegated by custom †."

Bishop Burnet was struck almost dumb in
 treating on this Article. He says not a word in
 vindication of the doctrine of reconciliation by
 Penance; nor does he enter into the particular
 consideration of the Judge that is authorized
 thereunto. In fact, he does not expound the
 Article, but gives a general dissertation upon
 the nature and reasonableness of Excommunica-
 tion, as set forth in the Scriptures, and practised
 in the primitive Church. When he treats of the
 causes for which, and the manner in which the
 sentence should be passed, he talks a language
 directly opposite to the whole tenor of the
 ecclesiastical Canons. And in the close he re-
 presents the Church as having long groaned
 under the management of the Civilians and
 Canonists, and as having long wished to see that
 effected, which was designed in the beginning
 of the Reformation. He says the draught of

* Rogers ubi supra, p. 195.

† Welchman ubi supra, p. 35.

the reformation of those Courts is still extant. But having said this, he probably recollected the timid disposition of that great Prelate, who moved him to undertake his exposition, and put him into commission to remove difficulties, and not to start them. Therefore while he acknowledges that by reason of the delay of the reformation, the tares grow up with the wheat; he thinks we ought to let them grow together, 'till the Great Harvest comes; or at least, till a proper harvest may be given the Church by the providence of God. In the ecclesiastical Register of time, there never has been a harvest season since the Reformation, and perhaps there never will be, till the final consummation *.

Upon the whole, how materially does the judgment of the Church vary from the rules laid down in the New Testament; where the excommunication of Offenders is represented, not as the province of any one individual Member, or Minister of superior rank, nor as taking place *ipso facto*; but as the act of the Church or Congregation assembled together, after repeated private admonitions †. The Gospel knows not any such instituted means of reconciliation, as the performance or commutation of Penance. Nor is the restoration of the Offender entrusted

* See Burnet's Exposition, p. 457 & seq.

† Mat. xviii. 15—17 1 Cor. v. 4, 5.

under different circumstances, to different Officers; but the Congregation from whose Communion he was excluded, are to forgive and receive him into fellowship again *, though not without a more credible evidence of his repentance, than either standing in a white Sheet, or paying a round sum of Money.

Here I must beg leave to pause a little for reflection. Permit me as a Protestant, seriously to ask the question, Wherein does the absolution of a notorious sinner, upon the mere performance of Penance, materially differ from the obnoxious doctrine of the *Opus Operatum* of the Papists? What is the commutation of Penance, but putting pardons to sale? A practice which surely can never be justified, however piously the purchase-money may afterwards be disposed of. Who can trace in the sacred volume, any distinction in the mode of the redemption or restoration of the rich and the poor transgressor? If I mistake not, Christianity puts us all upon a level in spiritual concerns, and supposes us all to be insolvent debtors, who must seek a pardon and restoration to the favour of God, merely from his free mercy thro' Jesus the one only Mediator. The language of the gracious promise, is, "I, even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions," (not for a good round

* 2 Cor. ii. 7, 8.

sum of money, but) “for mine own sake *.” And the prophetick invitation, addressed to the contrite Penitent, runs in a similar strain. “Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath *no money*, come ye, buy and eat, yea come, buy wine and milk *without money, and without price †.*” Can the followers of the blessed Jesus, admit the supposition, that the common Law of *England* is a purer system of ethicks, than Divine Revelation itself? Yet if the doctrine of this Article be agreeable to Scripture, this is certainly the case. For a great Lawyer of our own times, occasionally glancing at the doctrine of the commutation of Penance, assures us, that “the common Law is a stranger to such unaccountable barterings of publick justice ‡.”

Whosoever subscribes the Articles of the Church of *England*, as the condition of his toleration in the exercise of the Christian Ministry, is bound to preach agreeably to them; *et tueri et defendere fidem Ecclesiae.* But how then must a man preach? In treating of the forgiveness of sins, he must inform his hearers, that there is one way prescribed for the rich, and

* Isaiah xliii. 25.

† Isaiah lv. 1.

‡ *Blackstone's Commentaries*, Book IV. Ch. 19. p. 273. Edit. 4.

another

another for the poor. With respect to the former, he may assure them, that if they have fallen into any of the grossest crimes, they need not be beholden to the mercy of God—they need not be indebted to the atoning efficacy of the blood of Jesus—they need not seek the purifying influence of the grace and spirit of God in order to their repentance, nor submit to the reproach of publick Penance. But, *Horrendum dictu!* they may redeem themselves by a good round sum of money; and upon payment of such an adequate consideration, a diocesan Bishop is fully authorized to absolve them, and pronounce them fully reconciled to God. If from their knowledge of Scripture, they should happen to object the declaration of an inspired Apostle, “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were
“not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver
“and gold, but with the precious blood of
“Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and
“without spot *;” he must tell them (to allude to a memorable Tale,) that *Peter of Rome*, who had an admirable talent at interpreting his Father’s will, fortunately discovered that this was only spoken of the scattered strangers, who were reduced to extreme poverty by the rage of persecution; but that the reverse is true with respect to those who are in more affluent circumstances. This is the Gospel for the rich. What

* 1 Peter i. 18, 19.)

then

then must be said to such poor wretches, as have neither silver nor gold to purchase their reconciliation to God? This doctrine would naturally lead them to despair. But their relief is at hand. The consistent Preacher may assure even these, that the Scripture in conformity to an established maxim of the canon Law, declares *Que non luit in bursa luit in corpore*. For prudential reasons he may beg to be excused from quoting Chapter and Verse, and proceed to expatiate on their advantageous situation, when compared with that even of rich sinners of old. Under the former dispensation, a broken-hearted backslider importunately cried, "Create in me *a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me* *," not otherwise expecting, that God would restore unto him the joy of his salvation. But now may this Preacher say, the Christian dispensation being *less spiritual* than the Jewish, God does not search the hearts, nor try the reins of the children of men; but by virtue of the gracious tenor of the new covenant, is mercifully pleased to accept of a *corporal Penance*, so that it be performed in a white Sheet, in the body of the Church, and in the exact forms prescribed in the Canon Law.

Such I apprehend to be the doctrine of the Article. Yet I hope, nay I am persuaded that

* Psalm li. 10.

there

there is not a dissenting Congregation in the Kingdom, which would not dismiss a Minister, were he to preach this doctrine of Devils among them. Such I must both account and call it, as a Christian, and as a Protestant ; notwithstanding the anathema of the Canon. For I had rather be anathematized by all the Canons of the Church, than forfeit the approbation of my great Lord and Master, by assenting to a doctrine so repugnant to the genius and spirituality of his religion. What an insult upon the moral perfections of God ! What an affront to a crucified Redeemer ! Why did he shed his precious blood, if standing in a white Sheet, or the oblation of Silver and Gold, are equivalent in efficacy with his atoning Sacrifice ? How totally inconsistent is this, with the Scripture doctrine both of the necessity and nature of true Repentance ! The sinner who seeks reconciliation to God by this means, can, in my opinion, give no stronger evidence of his being yet “ in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity.” A faithful Minister would surely reject the proposal of *purchasing* a pardon with abhorrence ; and say to the deluded Wretch, “ Thy money perish with thee.” There is indeed hardly any thing more shocking, or more blasphemous, in the whole enormous system of Popish corruption, than this doctrine of reconciliation by Penance. Yet if you will credit some de-

declaimers, and some writers, *this* is one of the very articles of Christianity—*this* is one of the bulwarks of Protestantism. Christianity and Protestantism are basely calumniated by such assertions. The learned Judge above referred to, seems much better acquainted with the true nature of this doctrine, and has given a much more accurate account of its origin, than those who would thus palm it upon the eternal Spirit of Truth.

“ But though, says he, the being spiritual
 “ head of the Church was a thing of great
 “ sound, and of greater authority, among men
 “ of conscience and piety, yet the court of
 “ Rome was fully apprized that (among the
 “ bulk of mankind) power cannot be main-
 “ tained without property; and therefore its
 “ attention began very early to be rivetted
 “ upon every method that promised pecuniary
 “ advantage.—Indulgences were sold to the
 “ wealthy, for liberty to sin without danger.
 “ The Canon Law took cognizance of crimes,
 “ enjoined Penance *pro salute animæ*, and com-
 “ manded that Penance for money.—In short,
 “ all the wealth of Christendom was gradually
 “ drained, by a thousand channels, into the
 “ coffers of the Holy See *.”

* *Blackstone's Commentaries*, B. IV. Ch. 8. p. 105:

Such

Such beyond all controversy, was the *orthodox* original of the doctrine of reconciliation by Penance, held forth in the Article now under consideration. And it's natural tendency seems well to correspond with so pure an original. For does not this easy mode of reconciliation to God, appear well calculated to be the basis of a delusive hope, to hardened and impenitent sinners—to be the source of their comfort in the practice of iniquity—and a most powerful incentive to a course of sincere, stedfast, chearful obedience to the lusts of the flesh? I flatter myself therefore, that, upon mature deliberation, those who, I am persuaded, do not wish to rest their hopes upon the same basis, to derive their consolations from the same sources, or to walk under the influence of the same principles, which govern the views and conduct of the most abandoned and prophane; can no longer in the instance before us, approve the application of so high a compliment, as they formerly passed upon this Article, in common with the rest. But to proceed,

It is I presume sufficiently evident, that by subscription to this Article, we also declare our concurrence in judgment with the Church, that all who are rightly cut off or excommunicated, are to be accounted of the whole multitude of the Faithful, as Heathens and Publicans. The

Canons

Canons fully inform us who are comprehended under this description. Thus we pass sentence upon *ourselves* as accursed, devoted to the Devil, separated from Christ, and his Church's Communion. For it cannot be denied, that in some or other of the premises we all offend; since our principles as Dissenters, necessarily subject us to the sentence of Excommunication — of Excommunication *ipso facto*. For shocking as it is in a Protestant Church, professing to believe in the sufficiency of Holy Scripture, it is a truth unquestionably confirmed by the tremendous roar of thundering Canons, That to speak against any human inventions in matters of religion, is considered and treated by this Church, as a more heinous offence against God, than Lying, Swearing, Fornication, Adultery, or any other transgressions of the Moral Law. And our *Northern* Brethren would do well to be extremely cautious of subscription to this Article, lest unawares they should anathematize the Ministers and Members of their beloved Kirk *. It follows from a subscription

ex

* It would be difficult I believe to find in any Author, such bitter and severe reflections upon Prelacy, and all the essentials of an episcopal Church, as are to be met with in the writings of Mr. *Rutherford* of the last century, whose opinions appear to have been the general sentiments of his countrymen at that time. Nor is there any evidence to my knowledge, of any material change in the judgment of the Ministers of the Church of *Scotland* since that time; though the present security of the Kirk, has softened their resentment;

ment;

ex animo to this Article, that we ought to account ourselves and one another Heathens and Publicans;

ment; and the more polite taste of their writers, would lead them to express their sentiments in much more inoffensive terms. The Reader may take a specimen of Mr. *Rutherford's* opinion, in the following extracts from his letters. In one of them directed to his Parishioners he addresses them thus:

“ I counsel you, beware of the new and strange leaven of
 “ men’s inventions, beside and against the word of God,
 “ contrair to the oath of this Kirk, now coming among
 “ you. I instructed you of the superstition and idolatry of
 “ kneeling in the instant of receiving the Lord’s supper,
 “ and crossing in Baptism, and the observing of men’s days,
 “ without any warrant of Christ our perfect lawgiver :
 “ countenance not the Surplice, the attire of the Mass
 “ Priest, the garment of Baal’s Priests; the abominable
 “ bowing to Altars of tree is coming upon you : hate, and
 “ keep yourselves from idols : forbear in any case to hear
 “ the reading of the new fatherless Service Book, full of
 “ gross heresies, Popish and superstitious errors, without
 “ any warrant of Christ, tending to the overthrow of
 “ preaching : you owe no obedience to the bastard Canons ;
 “ they are unlawful, blasphemous and superstitious : all the
 “ ceremonies that lie in the Antichrist’s foul womb, the
 “ wares of that great mother of fornications, the Kirk of
 “ *Rome*, are to be refused ; ye see whither they lead you :
 “ continue still in the doctrine which ye have received : ye
 “ heard of me the whole counsel of God, sew no clouts
 “ upon Christ’s Robe.”

In another letter directed to Lord *Lowdon*, he thus exhorts him : “ Go on as you have worthily begun, purging of the
 “ Lord’s House in this land, and plucking down the sticks
 “ of Antichrist’s filthy nest, this wretched Prelacy, and that
 “ black Kingdom, whose wicked aims have ever been, and
 “ still

licans; and we agree that we ought so to be accounted by the whole multitude of the Faithful. But my conscience will not allow me

“ still are to make this fat World the only compass they
 “ would have Christ and Religion to sail by; and to mount
 “ up the man of sin, their Godfather the Pope of *Rome*,
 “ upon the highest stair of Christ’s Throne, and to make
 “ a velvet Church, (in regard of parliament grandeur and
 “ worldly pomp, whereof always their stinking breath
 “ smelleth) and put Christ and Truth in sackcloth and
 “ prison. They mind nothing else, but that by the bringing
 “ in of the Pope’s foul tail first upon us, (their wretched and
 “ beggarly ceremonies) that they may thrust in after them
 “ the Antichrist’s legs and thighs, and his belly, head and
 “ shoulders; and then cry down Christ and the Gospel,
 “ and up the merchandize and wares of the great Whore.—
 “ Christ shall never be content and pleased with this land,
 “ neither shall his hot fiery indignation be turned away, so
 “ long as the Prelate (the man that lay in Antichrist’s foul
 “ womb, and the Antichrist’s Lord Bailiff) shall sit Lord
 “ Carver, in the Lord Jesus his courts: the Prelate is both
 “ the egg and the nest to cleck and bring forth Popery:
 “ plead therefore in Christ’s behalf, for the plucking down
 “ of the nest, and crushing of the egg; and let Christ’s
 “ Kingly office suffer no more unworthy indignities.”

See *Joshua Redivivus*, Letters 2, 213. Edit. *Glasgow*, 1765;
 This good Man, I am sure, according to the Article and
 Canons, died under the sentence of the *Greater Excom-
 munication*.—And though I think far otherwise of his ever-
 lasting state, it must be acknowledged, that this illustrious
 Sufferer was betrayed, by an immoderate zeal, into a very
 unjustifiable severity of expression. Agreeably however to
 these views of Episcopacy, it is common at this day in some
 parts of *Scotland*, for the Members of the Kirk to reproach
 the Episcopalianis, with “ bowing to Baal’s broad Side.”

to consent, that the Church hath herein judged a righteous judgment. Many of the criminal affirmations specified in the Canons, appear to be the result of a judicious acquaintance with the sacred Scriptures—of a zealous attachment to the sole authority of Christ, as King and law-giver in his Church—an unfeigned regard to the purity and simplicity of Gospel worship—and a firm adherence to the fundamental principles of true Protestantism. Nor can I conceive that our venerable and godly Ancestors, who never repented of those heinous offences, and were never restored by the Archbishop, though they are thus anathematized by a Church on Earth, are separated from the Communion of the Church Triumphant above.

It is in vain to attempt to prove, that such consequences do not follow from a subscription to the Article; since there is no possible method of evading the conclusion, but by putting *our own sense and comment* upon it, and thereby deviating from the prescribed rule of interpretation, as laid down in the Royal Declaration. While however such are my views of the doctrine contained in this Article, no man can wonder, that I should scruple on this account, assenting to an encomium passed upon the Articles to which I have before referred. For there must be something very extraordinary both in the

sentiments and sensations of a man, who can account it the basis of his hope, to be thus held accursed by the whole multitude of the Faithful—the source of his comfort, to be devoted to the Devil—and a powerful incentive to a course of sincere, stedfast, chearful, obedience, to be separated from Christ, and his Church's Communion.

It would be wrong to omit the difficulty of subscribing to what is said of the nature, and extent of the power of the Civil Magistrate, and the chief government assigned to him; so far as it respects *ecclesiastical* causes, when it is asserted to be

ARTICLE XXXVII.

— *That only Prerogative which we see to have been given always, to all godly Princes in holy Scriptures by God himself* —

On this I shall only remark, that it does not appear to us from the Scriptures, to be the province of the civil Magistrate to exercise any dominion over the consciences of men. God claims it as his own prerogative to be the Lord of conscience. Consequently the Civil Magistrate can have no authority to “restrain with the civil sword,” those who are considered as “stubborn and evil doers,” merely on account of a con-

scientious non-conformity to an established Religion; or an equally conscientious non-compliance with the conditions of a Toleration, so limited as to afford them no relief from the penalties against con-conformity. For notwithstanding such stubbornness, if it must be so called, they may bear true and faithful allegiance to their King and Country, and in all respects be good subjects, and peaceable members of civil Society. We think this description in the Article, of the power given to the Magistrate, is vastly exceeded in the present constitution of the Church; in which the King is made supreme judge of heresy, and with the advice and consent of the Parliament, may vary the publick standard of Faith at pleasure. But these points have already been handled in a most judicious and satisfactory manner, by many of the ablest Writers; and by consulting their several treatises, the Reader may see the merits of the question fairly examined, and fully discussed *.

Thus I have gone through the consideration of those objections to the Articles, which equally affect Protestant Dissenters of every denomination. I could have insisted upon some few objections, which particularly affect those Calvinists, who considering that the Royal Declaration binds to a *literal* subscription, are apprehensive that some

* See particularly the writings of the Rev. Mr. Towgood, Dr. Furneaux, and Mr. Fownes.

expressions in the Articles, are too favourable to the tenets of other denominations of Christians. And it must doubtless be admitted, that the literal sense of the Thirty-first Article, which treats of the sacrifice of Christ, seems upon the first view, to be more consonant to the principles of the Universalists, than of the strict Calvinists. For it is therein said, that "The Offering of Christ once made, is that perfect Redemption, Propitiation, and Satisfaction for all the sins of the *whole World*, both original and actual." And the language of the Sixteenth Article, is not so explicit in favour of the doctrine of the final perseverance of the Saints, as Calvinists might wish; declaring only, concerning those who depart from grace given and fall into sin, that "by the grace of God they *may* arise again;" which seems to admit it as a possible supposition, that they *may not*. Whereas in accurate consistency with the sentiments of the Calvinists, it should have been said of true Christians, that they *undoubtedly will* arise again, and shall not be left *finally* to fall away. But it was not my design to consider the objections peculiar to any one denomination of Christians; and perhaps after all, the phraseology of those Articles is not so totally *repugnant* to the Calvinistical scheme, as to be utterly incapable of being honestly reconciled with it. It appears also clearly to me, that whatever little impropriety of expression the

Compilers might sometimes fall into, they had no intention of establishing any doctrine inconsistent with the principles of the Calvinists. All which Dr. *Nowell*, Dr. *Winchester*, and Dr. *Tucker* have of late advanced in favour of an Arminian interpretation of the Articles, is very far from being sufficient to refute the abundant evidence already produced by Mr. *Hill*, and the Rev. Mr. *Toplady* on the contrary side of the question. Nor have I any doubt but that the latter, who is a thorough master of his Subject, and a Writer of very distinguished talents, will remove every remaining difficulty to the intire satisfaction of an impartial Reader, in the Work in which he is now engaged.

If there had been any sufficient authority for the interpretation given of the Seventeenth Article, by some undutiful Sons of the Church; I should have thought it proper to have mentioned that Article, as one liable to objections from all parties. For in that case, an honest Arminian would hardly know how to reconcile himself to a subscription to it in the *literal* sense, by taking refuge in the *concealed* intention of the Compilers. While on the other hand, an honest Calvinist would fear that the favourable turn of expression in the Article, was nothing more than a trap laid to ensnare him, to subscribe his cordial approbation of an *intention to establish Arminianism*. But

as the Article now stands, I think Calvinists can have no reasonable exceptions against it; and it is neither my intention nor inclination, to find fault with the *orthodoxy* of the Articles. I confine my censures to their *heterodoxy*, *inconsistency*, and *unscriptural severity*, so far as all parties are concerned. Some persons have indeed thought, that the Author of a late Dissertation upon that Article, has fully proved it not to be Calvinistical; but I am far from being convinced that the proof is satisfactory. If it was the intention of the Compilers to establish the Arminian doctrine, I am sure that *Cranmer* totally neglected the counsel of his Friend *Melancthon*, who advised him "to avoid all ambiguities of expression; saying, that in the Church, it was best to call a Spade a Spade, and not to cast ambiguous words before posterity, as an apple of contention—that nothing should be left under *general terms*, but expressed with all the perspicuity and distinctness imaginable." Dr. *Winchester* (who is said to be the Author of that Dissertation,) has however greatly misrepresented Calvinism, and brought many passages to favour the Arminian interpretation, which are not at all to the purpose. By an inaccurate state of the true point of difference, between the Calvinists and Arminians on this subject, he has given an appearance of plausibility to many testimonies,

which would be found to be not at all inconsistent with the principles of Calvinism, when more accurately examined. The true state of the question, is, Whether Predestination follows from the foresight of faith and obedience? Or whether faith and obedience are the effects and consequences of the free, gratuitous, and sovereign purpose of God, predestinating his chosen people through Jesus Christ, unto the enjoyment of everlasting life? The Doctor sometimes treats the Calvinistical notion of an *irrespective* Election, as if it was meant to exclude all respect to faith and obedience, as the certain *fruit*, and necessary *evidence* of Election—or as if it was supposed by the Calvinists, that men might be finally saved, without either faith or holiness. Whereas they only exclude a respect to them as the *moving cause*, and *foreseen reason* of Predestination unto life; and are to the full, as strenuous Advocates for the Predestination of the *means*, as of the *end*. Now in this respect, the Article strictly corresponds with the principles of the Calvinists; for it clearly holds forth the secret counsel of God “to deliver from curse and damnation, those whom he hath chosen in Christ “out of mankind,” as the *Unde* derivatur of their Vocation, and of their obedience to the Call; of their Justification, Adoption, Sanctification, and religious Walk, as well as final Salvation; which may be plainly discovered in the

English,

English, but more clearly in the *Latin* Edition of the Articles. So that though the Doctor has represented the Article, as framed in opposition to, what he terms, the rigid doctrine of *Calvin*, there appears to be no solid foundation for this hypothesis *. The medium of proof which he has chosen, is in itself liable to some objections; and had before been applied at least with equal, if not greater success, in favour of the contrary conclusion, by Mr. *Hill*; who has produced numerous testimonies from the Writers of those times, not invalidated by this learned Doctor.

* I apprehend it is no reflection upon the modern Advocates for the Arminian interpretation of the Articles, to say that the Divines of the Church of *England* of the last Century, were full as well qualified to judge of the sense of the Compilers, as any Writers of the present day. Now it appears from the Copy of the Proceedings of some learned Divines, appointed by the Lords, to meet at the Bishop of *Lincoln's in Westminster*, A. D. 1641, touching Innovations in the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of *England*; that they considered Arminianism as repugnant to the original Doctrine of the Church. For the thirteenth Article of Innovations in Doctrine is thus expressed.

" Some have defended the whole gross substance of Arminianism, that *Electio est ex fide prævisâ*, That the act of Conversion depends upon the concurrence of Man's free Will, That the justified Man may fall finally and totally from grace."

This Assembly consisted of the great Abp. *Usher*, Bp. *Williams*, Dr. *Prideaux*, Dr. *Ward*, Dr. *Brownrig*, Dr. *Feately*, and Dr. *Hacket*. I do not remember ever to have seen this testimony invalidated by any of the Arminian Writers.

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The question may certainly be brought to a much more speedy and unexceptionable determination, by comparing the Article with the Institutes of *Calvin* himself. And there is such a perfect agreement between them in the sentiment, and in some passages, such a remarkable coincidence of expression, that I cannot forbear suspecting, that Dr. *Winchester* never read the writings of that Reformer on this subject. Upon the closest comparison, the principal difference I can discern, is, that *Calvin* wrote by far the most elegant *Latin* *. *Calvin* and the Compilers agree in their representation of the origin and source of election—of the fruits and effects of it—of the means of ascertaining it—and of the danger of looking only to the purpose of God, without having respect to the scriptural signs and evidences of election. Dr. *Winchester* indeed speaks of *Calvin* as never taking the merits and death of Christ into the account, in treating of our election. But the truth is, that the Reformer employs a whole section, to prove that Christ is the foundation both of our election and calling; or that Believers are chosen and called only in and through him †. I therefore dismiss all farther consideration of this Article, as fully persuaded of its orthodoxy.

* Compare the *Latin* Edition of the Articles with *Calvin's* Institutes, Lib. III. Cap. 24. § 1, 4.

† *Calvin* Instit. ubi supra, § 5.

In the course of the preceding Review, I have taken no notice of a modern Commentator upon the Articles. For though the title of his Work, would lead one to imagine it deserved some peculiar regard, it appears upon examination to be not at all to my purpose. It is intitled *A Scriptural Comment upon the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England*. But then it contains nothing more, than a collection of Texts of Scripture upon the *subjects* of the Articles, which do by no means always agree with the particular view and *explication* of those subjects, as given in the Articles. There is not a single passage alleged, which has the most remote tendency to prove those things to be agreeable to Scripture, which I have attempted to prove are exceptionable in the Articles. The Author indeed tells us, that he hopes "every candid mind" will allow, that the Articles of Faith in "the Church of England, are in exact unison with the Scriptures." But, I am sure, this was hoping against hope. For if the Reader will take the pains to examine the Texts produced by the Author, to prove that the Thirty-third Article of the Church (for instance) is in exact unison with the Scriptures; he will find that those passages sufficiently prove it to be the doctrine of Scripture, that scandalous Members ought to be excommunicated by the Congregation, after repeated Admonition. But there is
not

not a word of Excommunications *ipso facto*, nor of the administration of such ecclesiastical censures by a Chancellor, Commissary, or Archdeacon, &c. He will also discern, that it is the doctrine of the New Testament, that such should be received again by the Church into their Communion, after sufficient evidence of their genuine penitential sorrow. But it is beyond the critical skill of the greatest Master of modern Cabalism, to find out a *syllable*, or even a *letter* in the Texts produced by the Author, in favour of *Reconciliation by Penance*—by the Offender's kissing the stone Pavement of a Church, repeating a penitential Form, and dressing himself up in an Habit, fitted only to frighten pregnant Women, and Children—or by the payment of a good round sum of Money, as the condition of exemption from submitting to this penitential Farce. Nor is there a tittle respecting such authorized Judges as are referred to in the Article; nor the most distant intimation of *any case*, in which none but an Archbishop can reconcile the excommunicated Member. How far then do those Texts fall short of proving the truth of the Article! I have produced the same passages in support of the different opinion and practice of the Protestant Dissenters; and which of the two has the better right, to represent his principles as in exact unison with the Scriptures; I am very content any man of common

common sense and honesty should determine. I cannot therefore agree with the Author, when he says "Our Articles have as many Friends as the Truths have which are contained in them." For there are many persons, who are Friends to all the Truths they contain, and yet disapprove the Articles, on account of the many errors incorporated with those Truths. Surely a Gentleman, a Scholar, and a Divine, who was capable of making such a display of his Literature in an Appendix, must know better than to think, that the Texts he has produced under this, and some other Articles, do really prove the *several propositions* contained in those Articles. Is not this then (to allude to his own words,) being guilty of an atrocious attempt, if not to corrupt, yet infamously to misapply the word of God, in order to deceive the ignorant and unlearned part of Mankind, and bring them over to his opinion*?

From the several authorities by which I have supported my objections, every intelligent Reader will be fully qualified to judge for himself, Whether such Articles can with any propriety be called the *very Articles of Christianity*—whether they agree with the language, and breathe the spirit of the New Testament—and whether there

* *Madan's Scriptural Comment*, p. 76, 80.

is not a peculiar impropriety in requiring a subscription to *some* of them, from Protestant Dissenting Ministers? Or whether on the other hand, those who object to them are justly compared to *Epicurean* Atheists, and the Fools who say in their heart there is no God?

It was surely a very ill compliment paid to an inspired Apostle, when some late Advocates for perpetuating the obligation to subscribe these Articles of the Church, adopted one of his noble declarations in vindication of their conduct, at the celebration of a *Te Deum* upon occasion of the Rejection of the Dissenters Bill. For St. Paul's epistles will fully inform them, that those who *can do nothing against the Truth, but for the Truth*, ought not to subscribe their *own belief* of some of the doctrines contained in the Articles above reviewed; much less plead for the continued imposition of a subscription to them upon others, as the condition of Toleration. If however such is their view of the perfect conformity of the Articles to the Truth, they should instantly quit all pretensions to the *ministerial* character; since according to the Twenty-third Article of the Church, not one of them is *lawfully called* to take upon him the office of publick preaching, or ministering the Sacraments in the Congregation. But I am persuaded this is too mortifying a doctrine to meet

meet with their approbation, and is far from being in *their* judgment, perfectly consistent with the Truth.

Perhaps many may be satisfied, that taking Scripture to be the rule of our Faith, the objections I have urged to the Articles, are well founded. But then they have such a dreadful notion of heresy, that they think it safer to abide by the errors of the Church, than by the truth of the Scriptures; since both the ancient Canon and Statute Law, will bring them under the denomination of Hereticks, if they should happen to accord in judgment with me. *Lyndwood* defines an Heretick, to be one who doubts concerning the Catholick Faith, and neglects to keep those things, which the *Roman* Church hath appointed or decreed to keep*. And the Statute 12 *Hen.* IV. Cap. 15. gives a similar description of Hereticks, as teachers of erroneous opinions, contrary to the Faith and blessed Determinations of the Holy Church. These Definitions are now frequently transferred to the publick Faith, as varied in the present Establishment. And terrified by such apprehensions, many dare not think for themselves, but out of regard to their own safety, "have recourse to *implicit* Faith, and imitate that prudent Monk, who, when Satan would have

* *Lyndwood* Provinc. Lib. V. Tit. 5. Glos (1) in verb. *Declaretur*.

“ drawn him into Heresy, by asking him what
 “ he believed of a certain point, answered, *Id*
 “ *credo quod credit Ecclesia*. But, *Quid credit*
Ecclesia? said Satan. *Id quod Ego credo*, replied
 the other.” It is a just observation of an elegant
 Writer on this head, that “ where arbitrary
 “ power has prevailed, nothing has proved
 “ more profitable than either obsequious dulness,
 “ or a political palsy in the head, nodding and
 “ assenting to all.”

Omnia omnibus annuens *.

Of the numerous Authors who have pleaded
 for a strict adherence to the publick decisions
 of the Church, there is no man among the
 Moderns, who seems to enter so deeply
 into the true spirit of the ancient Canon Law,
 as the famous Archdeacon Dr. *Balguy*, who,
 according to his own account, would imitate
 the Monk wherever he went, and nod assent to
 any Creed, for the sake of a Stall in a Cathedral;
 as his attachment to Christianity is only *local*,
 founded not upon it's divine original and intrinsic
 excellence, but upon the *establishment* of that
 Religion in the Country where he resides. “ If,
 “ says he, in his Charge to the Clergy, it should
 “ be thought that I am here offering a defence
 “ of Popery, it would only be too candid an
 “ inter-

* Dr. *Jortin*'s Preface to his *Remarks on Ecclesiastical History*, p. 27, 28.

“ interpretation. I mean to defend not Popery
 “ only *, but Paganism itself. I mean to defend
 “ every established Religion under Heaven.”
 Consequently he would become an avowed enemy
 to Christianity, where any other Religion was
 established. Much might be said to expose the
 inconsistency of these principles, with genuine
 Christianity and Protestantism. Those who hold
 them can with no propriety be ranked among
 Protestants. But I forbear—the Doctor has
 already been beaten with many Stripes. We
 have for our comfort a more sure word of
 prophecy, to which we do well to take heed ;
 though by so doing, we shall in many instances
 unquestionably incur the guilt of Heresy, if we
 give any credit to such ecclesiastical representa-
 tions of the mutability of Truth.

Others will not carry the obligation of abiding
 by the determination of the Church, any farther

* When an *Archdeacon* was exhorting his Clergy to so
 firm an attachment to the Church of *England*, there was
 a peculiar impropriety in letting fall any intimation of his
 own willingness to defend Popery, if it should ever happen
 to be the established Religion. For every Archdeacon was
 enjoined by the Canons of 1571, among other Books, parti-
 cularly to have *The Monuments of the Martyrs* in his own
 Library. This Injunction was certainly intended, to cherish
 in their minds an irreconcilable aversion to Popery,
 wherever professed, or *established*—that it might never find
 an Advocate in that honourable rank of the Clergy.

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back than to the time of the Reformation; reprobating such only as Hereticks, who disapprove any of the Articles now established. Upon this principle, the Author of *A Letter to the Dissenting Ministers*, has thrown out some very illiberal reflections, insinuating that if we disbelieve any of these, we are no Protestants. But I may venture to assert, that the Author upon his own principles, is then as little intitled to the character of a Protestant, as any of us. It is however very absurd, to set up the principles of Protestantism, in *opposition* to a regard to the Scriptures. Protestants should all agree in maintaining a supreme veneration for the word of God, however they may differ in their interpretation of particular Passages. Men may alter their judgments in different periods of life, without forfeiting the character of Protestants in any. Nor is there any reason, that men should be unalterably bound to maintain every sentiment and position in a Creed, because it was framed by Protestants. The best of men have no just pretensions to Infallibility. “ Indeed to be absolutely against all changes, is either great folly, or great wickedness. Things may have been wrong constituted originally: they may have degenerated since: they may be attended now with different circumstances: and alterations may not only be reasonable to cure

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“ present

"present complaints, but necessary to prevent
"worse disorders *."

Perhaps others may suggest, that my objections respect only the *minutiae* of Religion—that they are mere trifles, which are not worth disputing about. But I beg leave to reply, that nothing is to be accounted a trifle in which conscience is concerned. A truly upright man, will always find as much difficulty to subscribe to the truth of what he really disbelieves, in matters of little importance, as in more momentous cases. The law of truth binds us not to a partial, but to an universal observation of it's sacred injunctions. And when men have once broken down the fence which God has set up, it will be difficult to erect any other boundary. When men are accustomed to *trifle* with conscience, in what they account *trifling* matters; it is a great chance, if any objections or difficulties, will appear *any other than trifles*, whenever interest and preferment may call aloud upon them, to repeat their violations of the law of truth. I cannot forbear lamenting upon this occasion, that the requisition of subscriptions, has been the parent of so many ingenious inventions, to teach men how they may play tricks with their consciences; that the essential and

* Bp. of Oxford's (Dr. Secker) Sermon before the H. of
of Lords, May 29, 1739, p. 12.

eternal difference between right and wrong, seems to be almost sunk in the apprehensions of some men, into a mere *nominal* distinction.

Nor can I by any means admit, that the objections above urged are trifling either in themselves, or in their consequences. It is no trifle, in my account, to pass a sentence of damnation upon my Fellow-christians, who may differ from me in their modes of explication, and forms of expression, on some particular points of Faith. It is no trifle for a Protestant Dissenting Minister, to subscribe himself an *Usurper* of the sacred character he sustains. Nor can it be a trifle to any man who believes in a state of future rewards and punishments, to sign his own *Mittimus* to the prison of Hell.

But some may be ready to say, If there is any propriety in these objections, how could the present bench of Bishops, who are said to be so distinguished for their moderation and candour, so strenuously plead against abolishing the requisition of subscription, from Protestant Dissenting Ministers?

The first and most obvious reason to be assigned, which will naturally occur to every *honest* man, is, *Their own firm persuasion both of the truth and importance of every one of the*

Articles. For there is something so shocking in the supposition, that the Right Reverend Bench could wish any set of men, to be bound to subscribe and to preach, what their Lordships in their own consciences do not believe to be both *true* and *important*, that I would be the last to admit any suspicion of this kind. I have no positive evidence of their disbelief of the Articles, which have been reviewed in the preceding pages; yet I must join with many in lamenting, that their opposition to us, is the only *apparent* evidence of their belief of some others. I should congratulate the Church, were I fully convinced of their attachment to some of those important and glorious truths, which are held forth in many of the Articles. I should then hope to see the characters of an USHER, a LEIGHTON, or an HALL revived in the present day, in their indefatigable labours for promoting the everlasting salvation of precious souls, by preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ. But this point may perhaps be more satisfactorily settled, by some persons better skilled in modern casuistry, than I pretend to be. May I not however be permitted to state my difficulties, and draw up a case for the determination of the Learned?

It is certain, no man could *suspect* the Thirty-nine Articles to be the standard of the national

Faith, from any of the Sermons which have been preached and published, by the Bishops of the Church of *England* for many years. There is a certain savour which usually characterizes the discourses of such Ministers, as believe certain doctrines of the Articles to be true, even when they do not professedly treat upon any distinguishing points of doctrine. But this does not appear to be the modern strain of preaching, adopted by the higher orders of the Clergy. Though their Sermons are, for the most part, preached upon particular occasions; yet some of those occasions, have afforded a very fit opportunity for insisting upon the peculiar doctrines of the Articles. But if we examine the Discourses which have been preached upon days of publick humiliation, we do not find the prevalence of sin, traced back to the *original* guilt and depravity of human nature, as its source; but represented as arising from the following of *Adam*, and the evil examples of his posterity, in *apparent opposition* to the ninth Article of the Church of *England*. We find the people directed, to put away their sins by the good work of reformation; but without any intimation of the necessity of being justified by Faith only, as *previously* necessary to its being pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ; and without leading them to seek that powerful operation of the Grace of Christ, and the *inspiration* or

regenerating influence of his Spirit, before and without which their works are not pleasant to God, but have the nature of sin. This is in *apparent opposition* to the tenth, eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth Articles of the Church of England.

Another fit occasion presents itself, for insisting on the peculiar doctrines of the glorious Gospel of the Blessed God, committed to their trust; at the *Anniversary meeting of the Society for propagating the Gospel in foreign Parts*. It would be natural to expect both from the design of the meeting, and the obvious scope of the passages of Scripture, commonly chosen to be the theme of the Preacher's discourse, that a *Believer* in all the doctrines of the Articles, should principally insist upon the lost and miserable estate of man by the Fall, and his own utter impotence to save himself—on the eternal purpose of God to redeem and save a chosen people out of every tribe and nation—upon the qualifications of Jesus Christ, to be the Mediator of the new Covenant—upon the all-sufficient efficacy of his atoning Blood—upon the perfection of his obedience for the justification of the seed of Israel—upon the provision of his Holy Spirit, for the renewal and sanctification of our depraved natures—or upon the suitableness of the provisions and promises of the Gospel,

200 *Their Opposition grounded on their Duty*

to the state of all mankind—that by these animating considerations, they might the more effectually convince their Hearers, of the excellence and importance of the design of their meeting; and excite them to a chearful concurrence in every measure, for promoting and extending the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour. But instead of this, how much more frequently are we entertained with a political essay, on the propriety of sending Bishops into those parts of *America*, where the Gospel is already preached?

It may be however farther alleged, that their opposition sprang not only from their *belief* of the *truth* of the Articles; but from *an inflexible regard to their duty, as appointed by the State, to be the Guardians of that Faith*. But there are some difficulties attending this supposition. It appears to me not a little strange, that their Lordships should limit their guardian care to those who are *without* the Church, and be so very negligent of the preservation of the established Faith *within the pale* of their own Communion. One may justly wonder, that they should be so extremely partial, in shewing favour to the flocks committed to our charge, as to do the utmost in their power, that our Congregations may be fed with sound doctrine; though the people under their own more
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immediate pastoral inspection, are permitted to perish for lack of knowledge.

It is conjectured from the general strain of preaching of the parochial Clergy, that their Lordships do not greatly interest themselves, in seeing that the Clergy of their respective Dioceses, preserve an *invariable* respect to the doctrine of the Thirty-nine Articles. If the *Tewkesbury* Informers should succeed in the prosecution they have lately commenced, and be so elated with their success as to make a parochial visitation throughout the Kingdom; it is much to be feared that were they to present every violation of the Canon Law, they would leave every Diocese without a Bishop, and near nine thousand Parishes without a Priest. It may perhaps be also justly queried, whether their Lordships religiously regard the Canon, which prohibits them from ordaining any persons, who are not "able to yield an account of their
"faith in *Latin, according to the Thirty-nine*
"Articles, and to confirm the same by sufficient
"Testimonies out of the holy Scriptures." Many Clergymen seem to know very little about the Articles; certainly not enough to give an account of their Faith in them as the Canon requires. But my difficulty on this head prin-

* Canon XXXIV of 1603.

cipally arises, from observing that such of the Laity, as are attached to the Calvinistical doctrines of the Articles, are for the most part constrained to desert their own Parish Churches, and to flock after some particular Preachers; who on account of their adherence to those doctrines, are stigmatized with opprobrious names, and hardly acknowledged by their Brethren, as Ministers of the Church of *England*. Now these have been so far from meeting with that countenance which they might justly expect, and have justly deserved from the *Guardians of the Faith of the Church of England*, that some of their Lordships have occasionally preached against them, and censured their principles, as deserving no better a name than *puritanical Fanaticism*.

Again, if their Lordships are really solicitous to maintain this character, why is the ridiculous custom of chanting Prayers, and the use of Organs still continued in the Church? So long as these are continued, every Cathedral, and every Parish Church in which an Organ is played, will be witnesses against them. For have not their Lordships repeatedly, and most solemnly subscribed to the truth of the Thirty-fifth Article of the Church of *England*, which asserts that "the Book of Homilies doth contain a godly and wholesome doctrine?" And is it

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not one branch of that godly and wholesome doctrine, that chanting, and playing upon the Organs, *forely displease God*, and *sfilbily defile his holy House**? To act consistently therefore with the

* “ Finally, God’s vengeance hath been, and is daily provoked, because much wicked people pass nothing to resort to the Church, either for that they are so sore blinded that they understand nothing of God and Godlines, and care not with devilish example to offend their neighbours, or else for that they see the Church altogether scoured of such gay gazing sights, as their gross phantasy was greatly delighted with, because they see the false Religion abandoned, and the true restored, which seemeth an unfavoury thing to their unfavoury taste; as may appear by this, that a woman said unto her neighbour: Alas! gossip, what shall we do at Church, since all the saints are taken away, since all the goodly sights we were wont to have, are gone; since we cannot hear the like piping, singing, *chaunting*, and *playing upon the organs*, that we could before. But, dearly beloved, we ought greatly to rejoice and give God thanks that our Churches are delivered out of all those things which displeased God so sore, and sfilbily defiled his holy House and his place of Prayer, for which he hath justly destroyed many nations, according to the saying of St. Paul, (1 Cor. iii.) If any man defile the temple of God, God will him destroy. And this ought we greatly to praise God for, that such superstitions and idolatrous manners as were utterly naught, and defaced God’s Glory, are utterly abolished, as they most justly deserved.” See The second part of the Homily, *Of the place and time of Prayer.* Edit. 4. p. 304.

Were the good Woman spoken of, in the Homily to rise from the dead, how would it rejoice her heart, to go into St,

the character of Guardians of the faith of the Church, they should banish all singing Men and Boys from their Cathedrals, and command every Organ in their respective Dioceses, to be taken away.

My difficulty on this head is increased, by reflecting that it is an indisputable truth, That such young Clergymen as really believe

St. Paul's, and see so much of the old Religion which was abandoned in her time, happily restored in these latter days!

It is remarkable, that the Thirty-fifth Article enjoins the reading of the Homilies "in Churches by the Ministers, *diligently and distinctly*, that they may be understood of *the people*." But any Minister methinks would cut a very awkward and ridiculous figure, to read this Homily distinctly in St. Paul's Church, after the chanting of Prayers, and the performance of an Anthem.

This Homily likewise furnishes us with a striking instance, of the inconsistencies into which those Men naturally fall, who are accustomed to subscribe in the gross. For many zealous Churchmen, who would not for all the World knowingly have said any thing disrespectful of the doctrines of the Church, have nevertheless earnestly and angrily contended for the practices, so severely condemned in the Homily. Bp. Atterbury has left us a curious Sermon, upon the *Usefulness* of Church Musick; which is throughout a perfect contrast to the Doctrine of the Homily. (See Vol. IV. S. 9.) Another of a similar strain, was published some years ago by a Minor Canon of *Worcester*, preached at the annual Meeting of the three Choirs of *Worcester, Gloucester, and Hereford*. And innumerable other testimonies might be produced from the Writings of the Clergy, in proof of this Observation.

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the Calvinistical doctrines of the Articles, however serious, or well qualified for their profession, have found it next to impossible to procure Ordination, if their principles were known by the Diocesan, to whom their title was directed. Some of them have indeed found shelter, in the confidence usually reposed in his Lordship's Chaplain; and so have stolen into orders, by virtue of some private recommendation to him, without saying a word of their *Orthodoxy* *.

Again,

* A young Clergyman of my acquaintance, who from his Childhood was distinguished by superior powers of genius, and whose moral character is in all respects unexceptionable, informed me that he was refused Ordination, on account of his belief of certain doctrines of the Articles. After he had passed through the usual examination by the Chaplain, the ——— came into the room, and questioned him very minutely concerning his Faith. It is not the common practice of his ——— to be so very particular, in his examination into the creeds of the Candidates for holy Orders; but he had received a letter, requesting him to be very cautious whom he ordained, by virtue of that title, of which my young Friend was possessed. This precaution was owing to an apprehension, that some person would be put in, who would preach what was of old to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness. His ——— paid rather more respect to the request of the letter, than to his own character as a Guardian of the Faith of the Church of *England*. For when he found upon particular inquiry, that the Candidate really believed the necessity of Divine Influences, and also the doctrine of
Justi-

Again, if we consider the Bishops under the character of the *Guardians of the Faith of the Church*

Justification by Faith, according to the tenth and eleventh Articles of the Church of *England*, after ridiculing both those doctrines, and declaring his disapprobation of them by some comparisons and examples, derived from the qualifications of his Postilion, and the conformity of those Articles to the principles held in the time of *Oliver Cromwell*; he absolutely refused to ordain the Candidate, assigning as the only reason of that refusal, "That these were *fundamental Errors*, and such as he could not in conscience suffer to be broached in his Diocese, as by his authority." But at the same time he assured him, that if there should be a revolution in his ideas, (*i. e.* if he should become an unbeliever as to these doctrines of the Church), he would very readily ordain him. The Candidate in a very solemn manner then declared, that his Faith was contained in the Articles of the Church of *England*; and as solemnly requested his ———, as a Head of that Church, to ordain him a Minister of that Church, upon the profession of his belief in them. This was resented by his ——— as *telling him his duty*. The next day his ——— was reminded by a very respectful letter, that the reasons assigned for refusing Ordination to the Candidate, appeared to be insufficient to justify that refusal. Since whatever his ———'s own particular sentiments were, of the principles which the Candidate held; as those principles were confessedly agreeable to the Articles, the censure, if any was due, must fall not upon the Ordainer, but upon the Constitution of the Church, which had not made sufficient provision against *fundamental Errors*. His ——— however still persisted in the refusal, and the disappointed Candidate, after a long and expensive journey, returned to *London re infecta*; and without receiving any gratuity towards defraying the expence of his lost labour,

Church of England, how must we account for their inexcusable negligence, in remaining silent Spectators of the *Oxford Expulsion*? This was such a blow at the doctrines of the Church, as called aloud for the censure of those, who were bound to protect the Faith delivered in the Thirty-nine Articles. What prospect could there be, that the Church would be supplied with sound and orthodox Ministers, when all who were known to espouse the genuine doctrines of the Church, were expelled from that renowned Seminary of Religion and Learning? That their *Faith and Devotion* were the true causes of their expulsion, is evident from the original accusation brought against the Students by their Tutor; and indeed from the whole tenor of the proceedings against them. The

labour, though the door of the Church was shut against him, merely on account of his believing the doctrines of the Church.

If the above declaration of his ——— be compared with Canon V of 1603, it may furnish a question for the Canonists, Whether any subsequent episcopal Acts could be valid according to the Ecclesiastical Constitution? For there is some difficulty in conceiving, that any person under the sentence of Excommunication *ipso facto*, who is in the just construction of the Canon Law, a dead and amputated Member of the body of Christ, should yet remain possessed of a lawful authority to absolve from sin, and to convey the power of absolution, and the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost to others.

account

account of some circumstances attending that judicial process, as well as others brought to light by it, can hardly be read by any true friend to Christianity, Virtue, or Decency, without sensible emotions of horror. Every good man must surely be shocked to think, that before such a Tribunal, the regal character of Christ, (the present joy of his disciples, and future terror of his enemies), should be made the subject of the most prophane derision; and by those too whose business and pleasure it should be, to proclaim the glories of that King, whom God hath set upon his holy hill of Sion. Such an impious contempt of our exalted Saviour, was a much greater crime, than any laid to the charge of those who were expelled. But the Heads of Houses thought those who were advocates for the Kingly office of Christ, were more properly deserving of so severe a punishment.

When the public attention had been drawn to this remarkable transaction by the friends of the injured parties, and the general opinion of good men of every denomination, appeared to be strongly in their favour; the PUBLIC ORATOR of the University, having most dexterously glossed over the infamous proceedings by several specious pretences, came forth and bade defiance to the armies of *Israel*. The consequence was, that Mr. *Hill*, like *David* the Stripling, went out, and as with a stone in a sling,

sling, in the name of the Lord God of *Israel*, slew *Goliath* the Philistine. The stone sunk in his forehead—he fell—and has risen no more. The victorious Advocate for the persecuted Students clearly proved, that every other reason assigned, besides the faith and piety of the unhappy sufferers, was nothing better than a pretence, to conceal the true cause of their expulsion; and that the learned Apologist for this act of severity, had endeavoured to secure an honourable retreat by falshood and misrepresentation*.

From

* See *Goliath slain* passim. And so far as the Doctrines of the Church are concerned, the Reader may see Dr. *Nowell's* misrepresentations pointed out, with great strength of argument and evidence, by the Rev. Mr. *Toplady* in his *Vindication of the Church of England from the charge of Arminianism*. The consequence of perusing those tracts, will most probably be a clear conviction, that there is hardly a pamphlet of the same size with the Doctor's in the *English* language, which contains so many egregious blunders. But many of the misrepresentations, ought in justice to be placed to the score of ignorance, as it plainly appears that the Doctor had then but very lately entered upon the study of Divinity; nor is it to be supposed, that he would knowingly have vilified the doctrines of that Church, "whose bread he eats, and whose raiment he wears." There is one misrepresentation however, which it more particularly concerns me as a Protestant Dissenter, to point out to publick notice. Speaking of the Calvinistical tenets, p. 94, he says, "The doctrines which you would father upon *Cranmer* and *Ridley* were really those of *Prynne*, *Hugh Peters*, *Marshall*, *Owen*, and others, who composed the assembly of Divines, most of whom were (according to

From many shocking instances, it plainly appears, that if the fervour of religious zeal had betrayed

“ my Lord *Clarendon* declared and avowed enemies to the
 “ doctrine and discipline of the Church of *England*; some
 “ of them infamous in their lives and conversations; and
 “ most of them of very mean parts in learning, if not of
 “ scandalous ignorance, and of no other reputation than of
 “ malice to the Church of *England*.”

The Doctor should have known better, both as an Historian and a Divine, than to have transcribed such a character of several worthy men, upon the bare authority of so partial an Historian, as my Lord *Clarendon*—a character, which wants the single circumstance of *truth*, in almost every branch of it. For the truth of History will permit me only to acknowledge, that they disapproved the discipline of the Church of *England*, as not conformable to the word of God. None of them were enemies to the true original doctrine of that Church, upon the several points to which Dr. *Norwell* refers; though they were agreed in an opposition to Archbishop *Laud*'s Innovations, and to that unconstitutional doctrine which Dr. *Norwell* himself preached before the House of Commons, and which that Honourable House so justly censured, as totally inconsistent with the principles of the Revolution; to the great joy of every Friend to the House of *Hanover*, and our excellent Constitution. It is not true, that most of the persons who composed the Assembly of Divines, were men of very mean parts. Many of them were men of very considerable abilities, of equal learning, as well as of eminent piety. There was no man among them of scandalous ignorance—no man of infamous life and conversation—no man but what had a reputation of a much higher and nobler kind, than that of mere malice to the Church of *England*. Their opposition to the Church did not spring from malice, but from a conscientious respect to what they judged to be the revealed will of God. If the
 Doctor

betrayed these young men into some irregularities; the dominion of sensual appetites had betrayed

Doctor meant to secure any credit, to his own frequent representation of King *Charles* the First, as the best of Kings; or to his compliment to that pontifical Tyrant, Archbishop *Laud*, as the brightest ornament of the Church of *England*; he should have spared the mention of the name of *Pryn*n; as the sufferings of that able Lawyer, bear very hard upon the character both of the blessed Martyr, and of his favourite Prelate. A pious King could never have thought, that the censure of lewd Actresses, was a crime deserving of so severe a punishment as a fine of 5000*l.* standing in the pillory, losing two ears, and being imprisoned for life. Nor can it be forgotten, that *Laud*'s pious motive for inflicting these heavy penalties, was no other than resentment of *Pryn*n's vindication of the true faith of the Church of *England*; and that in order to gratify the worst of passions, this brightest ornament of the Church of *England*, did not stick at telling the King a most notorious falshood, That the book in which the censure of lewd Actresses was contained, was purposely written against the Queen; though he knew it was published six weeks before the Queen acted a part in a pastoral at *Somer*set House. I trust the Church of *England* has had much brighter ornaments than this antichristian Persecutor, and zealous Patron of superstition and prophaneness; and I pray God that she may never have such another ornament as he was.

It is most astonishing to see the name of Dr. *Owen* bring up the rear of this list, as if some, or all of Lord *Clarendon*'s opprobrious characteristicks, were applicable to him. Whereas all who are acquainted with the Doctor's true character and writings, very well know that he was not only a Christian of unsullied reputation for the practice of true piety; but likewise a Scholar of great parts, extensive reading, and uncommon application; a very considerable Linguist; an able Divine well skilled in theological

betrayed many more into worse, which were nevertheless only made the subjects of mirth. So that if the former were justly charged with a violation of the Statutes, yet had our Saviour's rule been observed, that he who was without

controversies, and in all branches of Jewish antiquities; a most fair and genteel Disputant; a solid and judicious Writer; and held in such estimation by foreign Protestants, that when he was silenced by the Act of Uniformity, he was invited to a Professorship in the United Provinces. Nor was he less distinguished by his amiable temper, and great moderation when at the summit of his power towards the Episcopalians. Let me also observe, that he conducted himself with the highest reputation for wisdom and prudence, as Vice Chancellor of *Oxford* for the space of five years. So that I am fully persuaded, there was no connivance at gaming, lewdness, &c. in his time; nor any expulsion for praying, reading, and expounding the Scriptures. If the Principal of *St. Mary Hall*, should in any future period betake himself to the study of the Scriptures, and happen to lay his hands upon *Dr. Owen's Exposition of the Hebrews*, I persuade myself he will blush to think, that he should have mentioned the Author in such disrespectful terms. To this long note I will only add, that from the purport of the quotation from *Lord Clarendon*, as well as from the grammatical construction of the sentence, upon which these observations are grounded; the Reader would be naturally led to conclude, that all the persons whose names are there inmentioned, were members of the Assembly of Divines. Whereas in truth, *Mr. Marshall* (a Man of an excellent character) is the only one among them, who had a seat in that Assembly. I hope *Dr. Nowell* for his own credit, will both think and read, before he writes again on subjects and characters, with which he seems at present to be so little acquainted.

fin,

sin, should have thrown the first stone; it is probable, the Accuser, and the Judges, would have retired one by one, and left the six young men standing alone. A Friend to real Religion, could have been at no loss to have found out a sufficient excuse, for some few innocent deviations from Statutes, which are so little attended to, that the young men might probably be ignorant they were guilty of any offence against them; especially as they had the testimony of a good conscience, that they were guilty of no violation of the law of God. But how will posterity blush to read, that gaming, rioting, and lewdness were constantly connived at, though in direct violation of the Statutes; and that drunkenness in one instance, could be admitted as an excuse for blasphemous expressions; and a drunken blasphemer without any difficulty, obtain a Testimonium to qualify him for holy orders—while no quarter was given, and no mercy shewn, to such as chose to spend a social hour in the exercises of Devotion, rather than at a Card-table, and in scenes of riot and intemperance! Thus however did the University of *Oxford* publicly declare, that infidelity, and every species of immorality, are more tolerable in that seminary of *Religion*, than the true faith of the Articles of the Church of *England*, or the spirit and practice of true devotion. Nay to avoid the most distant appearance of giving

countenance to religious exercises, we are left to conclude, that the drunken blasphemer was requested and persuaded by the Heads of Houses, not to leave the infected Hall; in order that he might help to recover the *credit* of that House, from the odium brought upon it by the religious Tenets, and devotional temper of the young men who were expelled. It is therefore now a point most solemnly determined, that for Students in the University to believe the Calvinistical Articles, and to pray, read, and expound the Scriptures in a private House, are crimes of a more horrid nature, and more aggravated guilt, than to get drunk, to frequent Brothels, to beget Bastards, or blaspheme the power of God—crimes, which for their enormity, must even be put upon a level with that of administering the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to an Afs, in prophane contempt of a divine Institution. But is it possible that any Protestant, that any Christian, can reconcile such a decision either with the principles of sound morality, or the peculiar doctrines of revealed Religion? Surely not. Yet as this judgment was given by persons, who have solemnly subscribed their belief of the Thirty-nine Articles, who have taken orders in the Church of *England*, and profess the strongest attachment to the doctrine and discipline of that Church, and one of whom is also a publick Professor of Divinity; would

would it not be *naturally* inferred, that this decision must certainly be agreeable to the doctrine of the Church of *England*? Had I therefore been a Diocesan Bishop, and accounted myself one of the appointed Guardians of the Faith of that Church, I would have exhorted all my Brethren instantly to have joined with me, in bearing a publick testimony against such an irreligious, and immoral determination. And if they had refused their concurrence, I would have stood forth alone, in vindication of the true doctrine, and purer morality of the Reformed Church. Yet all these things, have passed to this day *uncensured*, by the publick *Guardians of the Faith of the Church of England*; while every friend to Religion, and religious Liberty, pities the unhappy sufferers, condemns the cruel and partial treatment they met with, and thinks the whole transaction, an indelible blot upon the reputation of the first University of the Realm.

When these remarkable instances are considered, in which the Faith of the Church has been left to shift for itself, without any succour from it's Guardians, and even when engaged in the sharpest conflict with the rage of persecution; it seems to be very astonishing, that any of their Lordships should have been seized with so sudden a tenderness for their reputation

in this character, as to make it a plea for opposing the relief of their Dissenting Brethren, I would with all due humility suggest to their Lordships, the impropriety of the means they have chosen to approve themselves faithful to their trust. There are many others, which seem to claim the preference to that of laying restraints upon the consciences of their Fellow-christians, and holding those in continued subjection to heavy penalties, who cannot conscientiously subscribe the Articles of the Church. Supposing their Lordships had rather tried the expedient of constant preaching every Lord's Day, in some part of their respective Dioceses, in defence of the doctrines of the Articles—a prudent caution not to admit any persons into holy Orders, who should be found either ignorant of the Faith of the Church, or disaffected to it; or a scandal to the ministerial character, by a dissipation of manners, totally inconsistent with the genuine power and practice of Religion—a more frequent parochial Visitation—and a stricter conformity to the canonical Injunctions, of suspending all scandalous and immoral Clergymen. Would not such means as these, have redounded more to their own honour, and to the credit and reputation of that Church, whose Guardians and Governors they profess themselves to be? These are means too, which have been already pointed out to

them by one of their worthy Predecessors, who was himself a shining example to his Contemporaries and Successors, of a most faithful and diligent respect to all the duties of the episcopal Function *.

The danger of trusting men to interpret the Bible for themselves, has, I think, with great impropriety been urged upon this occasion. So far from there being any just ground for this apprehension, it may be truly said, that all the mischiefs apprehended, have really arisen from the decrees of Councils, from the establishment of human Tests, and the imposition of human Creeds upon the consciences of Christians. Thus alone has the benevolent religion of Jesus, been made the innocent occasion of civil discord, and confusion. Thus too has that *Oidium Theologicum* been gendered, which “like
“ a poisonous tree, has reared it's head and
“ spread it's arms, and the neighbouring plants,
“ instead of receiving shelter and protection,
“ have sickened and withered beneath it's
“ baleful influence; yet has it proved a friendly
“ covering to weeds and nettles, and the fox

* See Bp. Burnet's excellent Treatise, intituled, *The Pastoral Care*, and his most serious and pathetick Address to the Bishops, in the Conclusion of the *History of his own Times*.

“lodges safely at it's root, and birds of ill
 “omen scream in it's branches *.”

Besides, if the various explications of Scripture, should be thought to render an established interpretation indispensably necessary, to secure an uniformity of Faith and profession; there is at least an equal necessity, for an established interpretation of the Articles; since the Clergy are contending to this very day, about their proper meaning and signification. But in order to magnify the importance of requiring subscription to human Creeds, the *Guardians of the Faith of the Church of England*, have, it seems, sacrificed the truth of one of the most excellent and important Articles of the Church. “Holy Scripture,” say the Compilers, “containeth all things
 “necessary to Salvation; so that whatsoever is
 “not read therein, nor may be proved thereby,
 “is not to be required of any man, that it
 “should be believed as an Article of the Faith,
 “or be thought requisite or necessary to Salva-
 “tion †.” False doctrines, and superstitious inventions of men, have much to fear from a due respect to this excellent Article of the Church. But the interests of religious truth will always gain ground, in proportion to our

* Dr. Fortin ubi supra, p. 27.

† Art. VI.

attachment to the Scriptures. I have the happiness to know that I speak the language of a Bishop. For when the most ancient, and one of the most learned of the present Bench, celebrated the praises of Queen *Elizabeth*, for the part she took in the Reformation; he expressed himself to the same purpose. "She employed the learned, the pious, and the wise, to examine all over again, by the surest test of truth, the Holy Scriptures. And the event was, (what must ever be the event, when sincerity is employed in the search,) that many false doctrines were (like bad wares) returned upon the hands of the Italian manufacturers in Religion *."

○ The same apprehension, another Divine of the Church of *England*, plainly entertained of the great importance of searching and adhering to the Scriptures, rather than to trust to the decisions of men; when he thus addressed his Congregation.

"It is by the especial blessing of Heaven, that ye have the free use of your *Bibles*, while the people of many other nations are deprived of it by the tyranny of *the Church of Rome*, which would make it of none effect

* Bp. *Pearce's* Jubilee Sermon, p. 9.

" by

“ *by her Traditions.* And to prevent the most
 “ ignorant of our Brethren from being led astray
 “ by her busy Seducers, permit me to illustrate
 “ the case of the *Priests of the Church of Rome,*
 “ endeavouring to take from you your *Bibles,*
 “ and our bidding you to hold them fast, in
 “ a plain and familiar instance : Should a
 “ Stranger in your walks on a sun-shining day,
 “ accost you and say, that the Sun is hot and
 “ troublesome, and shines so clearly as to en-
 “ danger your eye-sight ; and therefore if you
 “ would shut your eyes and give him your hand,
 “ he would shew you the right way : Would you
 “ not think the man mad, or something worse ?
 “ I will not mistrust your understandings so far
 “ as to make the application, but only observe,
 “ that it would be but common prudence to
 “ keep your eyes open, and look carefully
 “ about you in such suspicious company. Make
 “ use of *your own eyes,* and diligently read
 “ your *Bibles,* for the true Christian Faith ;
 “ prove all things by it, and examine thoroughly
 “ the great points in debate between the *Church*
 “ *of Rome* and us, and ye will plainly discover,
 “ that though *Christ's Kingdom is not of this*
 “ *World,* yet his pretended Vicar's is ; that
 “ wealth and dominion are in truth the great
 “ power which he adores, and that all his
 “ doctrines with which he hath perverted, I had
 “ like to have said, destroyed Christianity, are
 “ visibly

“visibly calculated to magnify and enrich
“himself. But whither am I going?—if my
“zeal for God’s word hath carried me out too
“far, forgive me this wrong: to be zealously
“affected in so good a cause is truly laudable
“and praise-worthy; and may the blessing of
“Heaven always accompany us in this good
“zeal, and direct us in it *according to know-*
“*ledge* *.” I will not mistrust the Reader’s
understanding, so far as to make the application
in the present case; but only add my cordial
Amen to this most excellent and truly Protestant
prayer.

The novelty of an objection to subscribing the
Articles, has been urged with equal vehemence,
against abolishing the present requisition. If
there was any truth in the objection, it would
be nothing at all to the purpose; if such a sub-
scription appeared to us, to be inconsistent
with the reverence which we owe to God, and
to the dictates of our own consciences. But there
is not that novelty in the objection, which has
been supposed and asserted. When the famous
JOHN FOX the Martyrologist, was summoned
to subscribe by the Queen’s direction, the véné-
rable old man produced his *Greek Testament*,
and said, “*To this I will subscribe.*” And

* Dr. Bearcroft’s Sermon at the yearly Meeting of the
Charity Schools, 1748, page 16.

when

when a subscription to the Canons was required; he refused it, saying, "I have nothing in the Church, save a Prebend at *Salisbury*, and much good may it do you, if you will take it away from me*." Nor was he the only instance in the Church. But, "Our Forefathers intirely approved the Articles." So say the modern advocates for subscription. But mark in how different a language, a rigid Churchman, above a century and a half ago, poured out his bitter complaint against them, to a tyrannical Prelate of those times.

"In the years 1571, and 1572, when *Subscription* first was required, the whole Land will witness, that many, and sundry books (as well in *Latin*, as *English*) then, and afterwards flew abroad. In which we read, how then, and in those days, the truth of God did in a manner but *peep out* (as it were) at the Screen; that *Cranmer*, *Parker*, *Grindal*, and all the other *Martyrs*, *Preachers*, and Learned Men, (which first in our age brought the light of the *Gospel* into the *Realm*) did see a little, and had a glimpse of the truth, but oversaw many things, which in these days of the *sun-shine* of the *Gospel*, men of meaner gifts do see; and yet may not utter them

* See *Fuller's Church History*, B. IX. p. 76.

" without

“ without great danger of the *Laws* (through
 “ the iniquity of the times) though the said
 “ things now seen be comprized in the *Book* of
 “ God, and also be a part of the *Gospel*, yea the
 “ very *Gospel* itself, (so true are they) and of
 “ such importance, as if every hair of our heads
 “ were a *Life*, (say the Brethren) we ought to
 “ afford them in defence of these matters; the
 “ *Articles of Religion* penned, and agreed upon
 “ by the *Bishops and Clergy*, and ratified by the
 “ *Prince, and Parliament*, in comparison of
 “ these things now revealed, and newly come to
 “ light, are but childish and Toys.—They say
 “ also that the *Civil Magistrate* is none *Officer*
 “ at all in the Church. For *Church Officers* be
 “ *Non Magnates, aut Tetrarchæ*, not *gracious*
 “ or *honourable Lords*, but *Ministers* of the
 “ *Church*. And that their controversy is,
 “ whether *JESUS CHRIST* shall be King, or no.”
 These he calls the uncouth doctrines of the
 factious Brethren *.

Let it be farther observed, that soon after the
 Toleration A& took place, Mr. *Baxter* drew up
 a brief explication of his sense of the Articles, in
 answer to the scruples proposed to him by some,
 who were called upon to subscribe them. This

* *Rogers's* Preface to his *Faith, Doctrine, and Religion*, &c.
 dedicated to the famous Abp. *BANCROFT*, p. 9, 11.

he gave in at the time of subscribing, to testify his disapprobation of the plain literal sense; and it is said that fourscore Dissenting Ministers in *London*, concurred with him in his objections and explication. He has objected to almost all the Articles which I have reviewed, and to several others which I have not taken into consideration; and has prefaced his explication, with a truly Protestant precaution against taking the Articles to be instead of the Scriptures, a necessary rule of Divine Faith; at the same time declaring his wish, that God's own word were taken for the sufficient terms of our consent and concord, in order to union and communion *.

Many Dissenting Ministers, appear to have been reconciled to a subscription to the Articles, by apprehending they should be considered as subscribing them according to that explication. But there is no sufficient foundation for such an apprehension; nor is any qualified sense or explication ever admitted.

As the temper and spirit of the times are much in favour of religious liberty; few, if any, of the most zealous advocates for subscription, will openly avow their approbation of persecution for conscience sake. But yet they think *some*

* See *Baxter's Practical Works*, Vol. IV. p. 957.

restraint should be laid, and some dominion exercised over the consciences of men. Such persons seem nearly to approach to the principles of *Valesius*, who was offended with *Socrates* the Historian, because he censured *Theodosius* for persecuting the *Macedonians*. He would neither wholly justify *Theodosius*, nor yet agree with *Socrates*, who spoke like an utter enemy to every kind of persecution. But *Distinguendum est*, cried *Valesius*, i. e. you must not thirst after the blood of Hereticks, but you must implore the aid of the Magistrate to restrain and keep them in order; and instead of alluring them by all kinds of gentle methods, they must be incited and attracted by the punishments and mulcts of the Imperial Laws; because he had learned by experience, that these had proved the happy occasion of their conversion. This art of distinguishing, is finely ridiculed by the elegant pen of our own Historian, Dr. *Jortin*.

“What is to be done then with one who is,
“or who is accounted or whispered to be
“ertoneous? Why, *Distinguendum est*: you
“must not shed his blood, nor enrich yourself
“with his spoils; but you may contrive other
“ways to bring him to a right mind, or to
“beggary: Ways, which resemble the method
“of Italian Assassins, to beat a man with
“satchels of sand: no blood is shed, and no
“bones

“ bones are broken, but the patient dies by
 “ the operation. A Gentleman and a Scholar,
 “ as *Valesius* was, should have nothing to do
 “ with such *distinctions* : he ought rather to
 “ *distinguish* himself from the vulgar by a larger
 “ mind, by detesting persecution in every shape,
 “ were it only for this reason, that it is the
 “ bane of letters *.”

To the same purpose speaks a celebrated
 Prelate, when, among other reflections upon a
 memorable period of our own history, he suggests
 the following improvement of it.

“ It must remind the Governors of the
 “ established Church, that rigorous treatment
 “ of such as dissent from it, and endeavours to
 “ extend their own authority, or influence,
 “ beyond reasonable bounds, are methods as
 “ contrary to Prudence, as they are to Religion :
 “ that neither Learning, nor Piety, nor eminence
 “ in other virtues, will be able to support
 “ them, without a suitable degree of *Humility*
 “ and *Forbearance* ; but that care to be in-
 “ offensive, and diligence to be useful, are their
 “ true strength †.”

* *Dr. Jortin ubi supra*, p. 30, 31.

† Bp. of *Oxford's* (*Dr. Secker*) Sermon before the House
 of Lords, May 29, 1739, p. 10.

Nor would I do so much injustice to the character of a modern Prelate, as to omit the testimony which he has given, to the propriety of the same inferences, drawn from the same events. "They are, says he, a constant lesson to us, that *liberty should not be used for a cloke of maliciousness*, nor power be exerted without moderation: that all indulgence should be shewn to tender consciences; but that toleration should not be made a screen to licentiousness and prophaneness: that *consciencess should be won by truth, time, instruction, and persuasion, not forced by authority* *."

It should seem too, that the Church of *England* is an establishment of such a nature, as does not stand in need of any such methods for its support; if the view given of her constitution, and the character of a Church of Christ, delineated by a learned Doctor, are both agreeable to truth and fact.

"The true Church of *Christ* pretends no divine commission to entrench upon the natural or civil rights of men; dispensing an authority of *reason to persuade*, not of *dominion to over-rule* private judgments; and thankful for the borrowed aids of such an establish-

* Dr. Drummond's (now Lord Archbishop of *York*) Sermon before the House of Commons, *January 30, 1747-8*, p. 20.

"ment, as can maintain the exercise and effect
 "of her sacred functions, without forcing the
 "inviolable dictates of conscience *."

After such professions, and many more to the same purpose, made by men thoroughly attached to the Church, it will be difficult to find any consistent plea for maintaining a dominion over conscience, in violation of the rights of private judgment; and without the least indulgence to tenderness of conscience. If there was indeed any reason to apprehend, that what really deserves the name of Fanaticism, would gain ground by taking off the restraints of penal Statutes; I would even then recommend to the consideration of the Guardians of the Faith of the Church of *England*, another noble passage in one of my favourite Writers before quoted, well adapted to this point.

"Worse than Fanatical Fervour is the sedate
 "spirit of religious tyranny, arising from the
 "lust of dominion, from sordid self-interest,
 "and from atheistical politicks, taking it's
 "measures, and pursuing it's ends deliberately,
 "void of all regard to truth, and of every
 "tender sentiment of pity and humanity †."

* Dr. *Tunstall's* Sermon before the House of Commons, May 29, 1746, p. 15.

† Dr. *Jortin* ubi supra, p. 34.

How any political inconveniencies can be supposed to arise, from granting a request which has no other object, than the preservation of the sacred rights of conscience, is difficult to conceive. The political interests of the nation have much more to fear, when men are tempted to hypocrisy and prevarication, in order to the security of their persons and property. The restraints of Law itself, are more feeble than the restraints of conscience; and when the best of principles have lost their effect upon the one, the severest sanctions of the other, will be insufficient to secure a general observance. "That
" Virtue is the strongest support of Govern-
" ment, and the countenancing of virtue the
" soundest policy; is a truth obvious to vulgar
" observation; a truth, so fixed in the nature
" of things by the justice of God, that it will
" make its force felt by every society, and
" every individual *." Now it can hardly be denied to be a striking evidence of the most virtuous integrity, when men voluntarily expose their own persons and property to danger, rather than obtain a legal security, upon condition of a subscription to Articles, which in their consciences they do not on many accounts approve. How then shall we account for it, that those who esteem " Virtue to be the surest

* Dr. Drummond ubi supra.

“preservative of national order and strength,” and have therefore exhorted us “to give all diligence to cultivate it;” should nevertheless both by vote and influence, do their utmost to leave their Fellow-christians open to penalties and imprisonment, merely on account of their conscientious adherence to it’s sacred obligations? Can this inconsistency be resolved into any thing, but those political views, which “give them up a prey to that party rage, or, as some affect to call it, party honour; (for honour is too often prostituted to the most dishonourable purposes) that party rage and party honour, which having once gained a full ascendant, lead even reasonable and otherwise honest men into the most absurd and unjustifiable conduct *?” Such an influence, it should seem, may with justice be applied to more cases than one. In the present day there is a peculiar impropriety in discountenancing the claims of conscience; so numerous are the evils which daily arise to our view, which are the effect of a general want of principle, in every class of life. And I am sorry to say, that it is not unusual with many of the Laity, to urge the example of the Clergy, in subscribing to Articles which they do not believe, for the sake of a Living; as a kind of authority for disregarding the dictates of conscience—a

* Dr. Drummond ubi supra, p. 23.

conduct

conduct which has too often brought the reality of Religion into question, by men of a sceptical turn; and the character of many of the Clergy too justly into contempt, with those who detest every species of perjury and falshood. Lectures of Morality lose much of their force, when it is known that the Preacher is indebted for his preferment, to such arts of dissimulation and prevarication, as would for ever reprobate the character of a Tradesman, in any commercial transactions. Such a Preacher will be considered by his Hearers, in no other light than as merely *acting a Part*. Excuses may be urged; but the opiates which have been so frequently administered, will no longer take effect. The Articles are now more read, than they have ever been since they were first set forth by authority; and the intelligent Laity cannot fail of discerning, how notoriously they disagree with the general tenor of their publick instructions. And though the unbelieving Clergy generally keep them out of sight as much as possible; others who are despised for preaching some of the doctrines they contain, are constrained to appeal to them, in their own just vindication.

If it should after all be suggested, that the Guardians of the Faith of the Church of *England* did not act voluntarily in their opposition to us;

but

but were *constrained* to it, by some superior power; it becomes me to do nothing more, than address the Church in the language of sympathetick lamentation.

*Tu mihi quæ imperitas, aliis servis miser, atque
Ducis, ut nervis alienis mobile lignum.*

In every view, the application of the Protestant Dissenting Ministers appears to be reasonable in itself; and all the objections to it frivolous and groundless. The present conditions of Toleration, must be considered as an infringement upon the natural rights of conscience, if there was no objection to the *matter* of subscription. And I hope the Reader is fully convinced, that many of the Articles to which our subscription is required, must be liable to exception by every Protestant Dissenting Minister. We therefore cheerfully appeal to the determination of every liberal mind, whether our objections are of such a nature, as to justify the severity of the Laws against us. And we readily submit our case to the decision of all the friends of Virtue, whether we do not act a more honourable part, when so reasonable a request is denied, in still refusing to comply with the requisition of Law; rather than to imitate the example of those, who *through covetousness with*
feigned

*feigned words, make merchandize * of the souls of men. It is both my fervent wish and prayer, that Protestant Dissenting Ministers may herein exercise themselves, to have always a conscience void of offence both towards God, and towards men †—not teaching for doctrines the commandments of men ‡; nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God §. That so, in whatever opprobrious light they may be viewed by the State, and whatever penalties they may incur by the Laws of the Land, yet when the chief Shepherd shall appear, they may receive a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away ||; and hear him say unto them, Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord ¶.*

* 2 Peter ii. 3. † Acts xxiv. 16. ‡ Mat. xv. 9.
§ 2 Cor. iv. 2. || 1 Pet. v. 4. ¶ Mat. xxv. 21.

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

Page 16. l. 18. *for were read was*

25. l. 22. *for venture add read venture to add*

72. note, l. 4. *for αὐτόθεν read αὐτόθι*

75. l. 4. *dele The reason of*

77. l. 12. *for impregnable read impregnable*

108. l. 9. *for originally read originally*

171. l. 8. *for Que read Qui*

191. l. 18. *for 12 Hen. read 2 Hen.*

199. l. 16. *for a Believer read Believers*

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